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The Nation.

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PERIODICALS DEPARTMENT

EDITORIAL

WHAT PRICE BLACK HELP?

It did not take Andrew Young long to realize that he had bombed badly in San Francisco. His lonely act as front man for the Mondale forces during the platform debate produced the Democratic Convention's most rancorous moment. Blacks and other Rainbow members booed the Atlanta Mayor for taking Mondale's line against Jesse Jackson's minority plank on runoff primaries. And yet the Democratic establishment gave Young nothing for his efforts. Black interests were cut from Mondale's laundry list of campaign promises, and blacks left San Francisco bitterly disappointed. Within a month, Young had turned against the "smart-ass white boys" in the Mondale campaign.

Black leaders who supported Jackson during the primaries (as well as many who did not) are trying to salvage something from a campaign that they did so much to enliven and that is now out of their hands. Last week in St. Paul, Jackson and other black leaders met with Mondale. Of course they were not united in their demands; they come from hugely disparate sectors of the party and have widely differing constituencies. Some have a solid black base; others get campaign funds and votes from the white majorities in their cities or districts. They did extract some promises from Mondale, but on the crucial question of a full-scale jobs program, the top priority for blacks, the candidate demurred.

For now, Jackson promises to campaign for the Mondale-Ferraro ticket. After all, his coalition has the most to lose from another Reagan term. But no matter how hard he stumps, Jackson cannot deliver the votes of those who feel they have been denied a share of power in the party. There's a price for such loyalty, and so far Mondale has not made a good enough offer.

INDUSTRIAL POLICY FOR THE LEFT
Gregory D. Squires
Kim Moody
Jonathon Simon
Samuel Bowles
David M. Gordon
Thomas E. Weisskopf

FANNY WRIGHT, REBEL WOMAN
Lawrence Goodwyn

LABOR IN NEW YORK
Michael Kazin

LAURIE ANDERSON
Frank Rose

GUATEMALAN REFUGEES

A POLITICAL DILEMMA FOR MEXICO

VICTOR PERERA

When Dr. Roberto Gomez Alfaro, the forthright director of Comitán Hospital in Chiapas, Mexico, examined the bodies of six Guatemalan refugees killed by assailants wearing Guatemalan Army uniforms in El Chupadero camp, four miles inside Mexico's border, he duly reported that an 11-year-old boy had been castrated and a pregnant woman's ears had been severed. Such mutilations are a routine part of operations carried out by the *kaibiles*, or anti-insurgency special forces, who are responsible for most of the massacres of Indians in the Guatemalan highlands.

"But there was something else I did not report," the director said when I interviewed him at the hospital, where Guatemalan refugees are treated for acute malnutrition as well as pulmonary and gastrointestinal ailments contracted in the Lacandon jungle. Doctor Gomez Alfaro's eyes clouded, and his authoritative tone faltered. "The skulls of the boy and the pregnant woman had been opened and their gray matter had been removed. Now, why on earth would they do something like that?"

In this decent, worldly-wise Mexican doctor's consternation I relived all the frustration I have experienced in reporting on developments in Guatemala during the past dozen years. If he could make no sense of the horrors, how could I begin to make them comprehensible to North Americans? Events in Guatemala have a persistent habit of racing ahead of one's most fevered imaginings.

I took a deep breath and replied that the killers were most likely career soldiers of Indian origin whose communal bonds had been system-

(*Continued on Page 176*)

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LETTERS.

A 'DRAGON AT THE DOORSTEP'

Staten Island, N.Y.

Staten Island has long thought of itself as "the forgotten borough." It would be ironic if that borough finally entered the minds of New Yorkers because of the Navy's plan to build a nuclear base here; especially if, as seems likely due to limited press coverage, they learn about those plans after the fact.

Adequate reporting of this event has been virtually nonexistent. *The Nation*'s editorial "Unsafe Harbor," in the August 18-25 issue, is the only one I have seen in a national magazine. Except for the recent Op-Ed piece critical of the project, *The New York Times* has been lax in its reporting about this dragon at the doorstep. *New York* has yet to mention it. *The Village Voice* (up to and including your—recently—own Alexander Cockburn) has never confronted the issue. Indeed, the only regular supply of news on the subject has been the *Staten Island Advance*, part of the Newhouse chain, whose gung-ho attitude has biased its handling of the question from the start. . . .

As a result, even residents of New York City and close readers of reputable journals are not aware that Senator Alfonse D'Amato's figure of 9,000 jobs is sheer fiction. In a recent letter to me, D'Amato revised that estimate downward, to 6,700 jobs, thus tacitly admitting that the figures he had so widely circulated were inflated by at least 30 percent. In fact, the highest figure the Navy itself will commit to is a mere 300 jobs, most of them for high-tech specialists, and Staten Islanders with appropriate skills will have to compete with comparably trained workers from all over the East Coast.

Economically, we're being sold a pig in a poke. Politically, we're being converted to a nuclear military installation. Environmentally, we're about to be forced to live with hundreds of nuclear warheads stored in our front yard. More than occasional editorials are called for here. . . .

If a nuclear base was planned for Battery Park, Senator Daniel Moynihan's recent assertion that there is "nothing intrinsically hazardous" about nuclear weapons except "when they are used" would have seen him lynched in effigy across Manhattan. Do you really think we're so remote out here, only a ferry ride away? *A.D. Coleman*

GETTING OUT UNION VOTES

Northridge, Calif.

Joel Rogers's piece on the promises and pitfalls of voter registration for the upcoming election was informative and useful to readers who want to volunteer for voter registration. Whether because of the author's oversight, or its insignificant extent, union voter registration activities received only the barest mention under the list of organizations. This is strange considering Mondale's primary indebtedness to the A.F.L.-C.I.O. for the nomination. I have reason to believe union voter registration efforts could be very effective.

In 1958, the jobs of California union officials and their employees were seriously threatened by a so-called right to work proposition on the state ballot. John Cooper, then president of the joint board of Hotel and Restaurant Workers locals, and my immediate boss, came up with an ingenious and doubly productive plan for the voter registration of union family members. He organized a citywide survey of services provided by the Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union, and the extensive hospital, medical, dental, legal aid and pharmaceutical benefits to which union members and their families were entitled. Union teachers on summer leave were trained to be the interviewers. At the end of each interview, qualified citizens were registered to vote.

Other California unions must have been moved to equally heroic efforts because all records of Democratic Party registration were broken that year and the odious proposition was soundly defeated. Organized hotel and restaurant workers received the added bonus of significant reforms in the administration of their health and welfare benefits as a result of the survey. Conclusion: like everyone else, when union leaders are highly motivated, they can do the job.

Nicholas V. Seidita

REGISTRATION CAMPAIGN IN BOSTON

Boston

I agree with Joel Rogers's statement that "in any country that claims to be a democracy, low electoral participation is an embarrassment" ["The Politics of Registration," *The Nation*, July 21-28]. . . .

I would, however, like to respond to Rogers's comments about Boston. I believe he talked only to the Human Serve representative in Boston, because if he had talked to the Mayor's office he would have reached some different conclusions.

The article states, "Gov. Michael Dukakis and Boston 'populist' Mayor Raymond Flynn have not challenged the inaction of state social service agency directors or the obstruction caused by local registrars." I cannot speak for the Governor's office, but the city has, quite to the contrary, mounted a campaign to register voters.

The city is deputizing city employees at the twenty community schools (they operate programs throughout the summer and winter months in our city's neighborhoods) and at twenty-five branch libraries; we are planning to deputize employees at the twenty-four public-housing management offices to make registration available during working hours, Monday through Friday, in every neighborhood of the city.

The Election Department is also sending registrars to all public and private high schools in the fall and to neighborhood health centers and the Boston City Hospital on a regular basis. This is at the initiation of the Mayor, not the local voter registration groups. In addition, we are honoring all requests by community groups for voter registration in their neighborhoods and at agencies and welfare and unemployment lines. . . .

On August 2, the city kicked off the Boston public housing voter registration campaign at a formal press conference. This effort will involve all the public housing tenant task forces in the city, coordinated and organized by the Mayor's Office of Community Participation and the Election Department. Every head of household in the twenty-three family housing projects targeted has been contacted by notices in their rent bills. Flyers have been distributed throughout the projects, and task force members will be going door to door to bring people out to register to vote. The Mayor is also on record in support of mail-in registration. . . .

This is an extremely important election year. . . . When the Mayor's voter registration efforts are complete, no one should be able to say they did not have a chance to register to vote. . . . *Dinah Vaprin*

Deputy Press Secretary
Office of the Mayor

ROGERS REPLIES

New York City

Space limitations prevent a full reply to Vaprin's misleading and inaccurate letter, but three points can be noted briefly. First, at the time my article was published, none of the major outreach efforts she describes was under way, and even now, with only about a month to go before the rolls close, many of those efforts are still only plans for future actions. To this date, for example, no employees of the Boston Public Library, City Hospital or Housing Authority have been deputized for voter registration. Second, it is simply not true that Mayor Flynn's office initiated agency-based voter registration. Current efforts began only after the Mayor was intensely pressured by a variety of labor unions, community groups and human service organizations, which proposed the plan in the first place, and after the Boston City Council had approved its substance. As recently as late June, Vaprin will recall, Mayor Flynn was proposing 40 percent cuts in the Election Department's staffing and services. Third, no particular credit can be claimed by the Mayor for honoring requests by community groups for off-site voter registration. He is compelled to do so under the terms of a consent order issued last year by the Massachusetts Superior Court.

I stand by the article. *Joel Rogers*

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EDITORIALS.

Political Opium

No leader of a Western empire since Frederick Barbarossa has courted the church as deliberately and assiduously as Ronald Reagan. Frederick, of course, practically crawled to Pope Alexander III to renounce his independent political authority. Reagan flew to Dallas to confess at a fundamentalist prayer breakfast that "politics and morality are inseparable" and that religion rightly belongs in every sector of American political life. So much for the First Amendment.

If Reagan had intended to make a more-or-less truthful observation, instead of throwing red meat to the religious right he might have said something like this:

> Like other groups, America's numerous religious faiths have political interests and compete in the governmental arena to have their views adopted. There is no monolithic religious morality in this country (thank God). If politics and morality are inseparable, so are politics and social, economic, class, gender, race and other considerations. Thanks to the magic of the marketplace of ideas no single group is allowed to have a monopoly on truth—or morality.

In the 1960s theologians and secular intellectuals argued

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mightily about the state of God's health. Some thought He (or She) was dead; others believed the Deity was merely on an extended vacation. It now appears that God was seasonally away from Washington, organizing the constituents for conservatism. Reagan and his closest advisers are busy creating what no less a G.O.Partisan than William Safire calls a Christian Republican Party. After November they hope to fulfill God's plan for the country. Four more years should give them plenty of time.

Religious leaders from Managua to Teheran are once again boldly asserting their influence in political affairs. New York City's Archbishop John J. O'Connor, who is as doctrinally conservative as President Reagan, is feuding with Gov. Mario Cuomo about abortion. O'Connor first said Catholics should abjure candidates who were not anti-abortion; later he hedged, but he still insists that church members must fight on God's side in that political contest. Earlier, O'Connor had his way with Mayor Ed Koch, who asked the New York Archbishop to comply with his executive order forbidding discrimination against homosexuals in charitable services funded from public coffers. O'Connor balked and Koch backed down.

Meanwhile, in Central America, Nicaragua's Archbishop Obando y Bravo has been busily organizing counterrevolution, with money secured from American corporations. In Rome, Pope John Paul II is on a tear about liberation theology, the school of Catholic thought which preaches against capitalism, nuclear arms and U.S. imperial domination. And in Poland, of course, the church is deeply involved in the nationalist movement.

From Reagan to the peasant priest of the Iglesia Popular, there are many facets to the revival of religious involvement in politics, and adherents of most contemporary secular ideologies are eagerly reaching out to their sacred counterparts. The socialist *Monthly Review* devoted its summer double issue to "Religion and the Left," and it finds hope in the progressive work of many Christian sects. The editors note that most critics repeat Marx's dictum on religion out of context. Marx wrote, "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of the heartless world," before adding, "It is the opium of the people."

Still, it has always been dangerous to democracy to impose the essentially authoritarian straitjacket of religion on human political activity. God may indeed prefer Reagan to Mondale, or the *contras* to the Sandinistas, or peasants to oligarchs, but there is no good way of knowing, beyond the claims of self-proclaimed prophets, whether in purple robes or three-piece suits. Diderot, after all, had a point: "Mankind shall not be free until the last king is strangled with the entrails of the last priest."

BOSTON ROUNDTABLE

We can't prove that Fritz Mondale obtained tapes of the first annual Boston Roundtable on Security, the War System and Peace Mobilization, held at Harvard Divinity School from August 19 through 26, but his recent assertion that his policy on nuclear war signaled the most important difference between his campaign and President Reagan's may have been a response to the conference's effort to make peace an issue in the election.

Another aim of the conference, convened by the Nation Institute and the Institute for Policy Studies, was to get scholars and policy-makers talking with peace activists. When the two dozen experts and forty disarmament movement leaders came together in Cambridge last week, both goals were achieved—and then some. For a full report, see next week's *Nation*.

Back to School

Virtually unreported by the U.S. press, El Salvador's National University campus was reopened in late June. For four years the sprawling grounds in downtown San Salvador had been occupied by the National Guard. The return of the campus to civilian control coincides with a significant resurgence of political activity in El Salvador—a resurgence which could become a crucial factor in the outcome of the war between the government of José Napoleón Duarte and leftist rebels.

On June 26, 1980, without warning, squads of heavily armed National Guardsmen overran the campus after the military/Christian Democratic junta charged that it was a hotbed of subversion. Dozens of students were wounded and at least fifty were killed in the resulting melee. The campus was sealed off, and a detachment of National Guardsmen took up residence in its halls and classrooms. During the next four years the troops methodically looted the university. They sold off valuable library collections, destroyed the archives, ransacked offices, disposed of research and laboratory equipment on the black market, carefully removed thousands of louvered windows and sold them to private construction firms, and stripped every last fixture, faucet and electrical switch from the school buildings. Overseeing the $20 million sacking was Gen. Carlos Eugenio Vides Casanova, at the time commander of the National Guard and now President Duarte's Defense Minister.

But the university did not die. Its faculty held classes in rented rooms throughout the capital, even though professors were arrested and students disappeared. The posters calling for "Trial for the War Criminals" and the scratched-out murals of Che Guevara that still adorn the ravaged library are ghostly reminders of the university's importance as a spawning ground of resistance to a half-century of military rule.

On June 26, a few days after the occupation ended, a defiant graduation ceremony was held on campus. It was no accident that the one building that the school refurbished for the event contains the Law School auditorium, which in April 1980 was the birthplace of the Democratic Revolutionary Front, the center-left opposition political alliance

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which has been forced underground and has since linked up with the guerrilla movement.

On the day of the ceremony the auditorium buzzed with political activity. Songs from revolutionary Nicaragua filled the air while more than a hundred sons and daughters of the middle class paid tribute to classmates who had been arrested or killed over the past years. Students hung red banners over the school fence calling for the release of political prisoners, and passed out leaflets criticizing President Duarte for not agreeing to unconditional talks with the guerrilla leaders.

University rector Miguel Angel Parada, a figure frequently threatened by death squads, addressed the ceremony and blasted the Duarte government for not providing funds for the reconstruction of the campus. Using the sort of challenging words that have not been heard at a public event in the capital in years, the rector vowed that the university would support and encourage political activity by the faculty and students. "What is opening up before us is not a period of celebration," he said, "but one of struggle, in which we will, without doubt, meet our traditional enemies head-on."

The reopening of the university campus may pose a dilemma for President Duarte, who has won the warm support of the U.S. Congress with his "moderate" rhetoric. As the campus returns to life, student organizations resurface and the political ferment resumes, how long will he be able to keep his promise to respect the school's autonomy? How long will he be able to tolerate a new urban opposition movement? Even as the graduation ceremony was taking place, thousands of civil service workers were on strike in San Salvador, marking the rejuvenation of union activity in national life.

In 1980 a powerful alliance of students and the working class brought about the bloody repression that served as a catalyst for the armed struggle. A reactivated alliance, linked to the growing military strength of the rebels, could be the combination that brings about the downfall of the Duarte government. MARC COOPER AND GREG GOLDIN

Marc Cooper and Greg Goldin report on Central America for a number of national publications. Their in-depth interview with President José Napoleón Duarte will appear in the November issue of Playboy.

Hands-Off Policy

When word got out that a no-kissing policy was in effect between Walter Mondale and Geraldine Ferraro, some called it ridiculous and others dismissed it as unnecessary. But with the first woman Vice-Presidential candidate in American history on a major-party ticket, the nominees' decision to refrain from affectionate physical contact was neither silly nor unnecessary. It was made for the wrong reason—to forestall gossip that they were having an affair—but it was the right decision.

Men have always used displays of affection to signal proprietary rights to their female companions. A strategically timed kiss, an arm draped over a shoulder, communicate the message instantly: She's my property. As women moved into the labor force, those struggling for positions of power soon learned that seemingly innocuous gestures could have a more malign effect, undermining their authority. When male colleagues enter a board room, they greet one another with a handshake. When men are being businesslike with women, the greeting is the same. A kiss or a pat on the back immediately conjures up an image of "the little woman" rather than of a peer whose power must be respected.

If Walter Mondale were frequently to give Geraldine Ferraro a hug or a peck on the cheek in front of the cameras, the "little woman" image would be reinforced, day after day, for millions of Americans already accustomed to seeing men relate to women that way. Ronald Reagan greets Nancy with a kiss. Mondale and Ferraro are not a couple; they are a team.

The fact that images of Ferraro in a traditional female role—the object of a man's affections—are not being televised daily is in itself an important victory for the cause of equality. The pressures on her to conform to female stereotypes have been unremitting. When the Democratic ticket opened its campaign in the South at the beginning of August, Mississippi Commissioner of Agriculture Jim Buck Ross asked Ferraro not how she felt about farm price supports or the national debt but about her cooking skills. "Can you bake a blueberry muffin?" he demanded. She got the last laugh when she replied: "I sure can. Can you?"

Since then the controversy over the Zaccaro-Ferraro financial affairs has consumed the headlines, the press becoming unhinged by a candidate whose spouse has a complex legal and financial identity in his own right. But even in the midst of an uproar that would have made less stalwart candidates quail, Ferraro continues to be taunted by men seemingly unable to cope with the fact that the Vice-Presidential nominee is a woman. After she told columnist George Will on national television that he should apologize for a piece he did on her disclosure problems, Will sent her a dozen roses with a note saying she was "cute" when she was mad.

"Vice Presidents aren't cute," Ferraro informed him by telephone.

One female candidate does not a revolution make; social change is an incremental process. But although this increment may be small, it is not without importance. Because the Democratic nominees had to think about the implications of their interactions, Americans are forced to think about them too. The fact that men keep trying to impose stereotypes on Ferraro makes us realize how inappropriate they are in this context. The unflinching skill with which she deflects them reminds us how irrelevent they always have been. LILY STEWART

Lily Stewart is the pseudonym of a New York City-based journalist.

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MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

The vulgar carnival of chauvinism and piety in Dallas last month made one thing plain. The old, quasi-internationalist wing of the Republican Party has been not so much routed as humiliated. Men like Charles Percy, Elliot Richardson and Charles Mathias are regarded as virtual appeasers; the tradition of Rockefeller, Scott and Scranton is identified by the paranoids as synonymous with Trilateralism, world government and communism. Nothing makes this clearer than the routine, venomous America First tone in which the Administration and its supporters denigrate the United Nations.

This tendency is identified in many minds with Jeane Kirkpatrick, the hate-figure of choice among liberal Democrats. If only she was the worst. The new, hectoring, bullying style does not model itself even on her pseudo-intellectual scholasticism and apologetics. It has more in common with the unreformed Barry Goldwater. The most lurid and candid recent example came from a U.S. delegate to the International Olympic Committee, who, in arguing for the readmission of South Africa to the Games, openly said that "blacks don't like water" and don't make good swimmers. Have we come to this?

Apparently, we have. I recently stumbled upon an exchange that shows how far down the track of reactionary isolationism the Reaganites are prepared to go. Here in Washington, the Heritage Foundation has become a major resource center for the more conservative elements in the Administration. It supplies personnel and furnishes ideas. Its president, Edwin Feulner, has been offered the post of counselor at the State Department. He also chairs the President's Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, making recommendations about the conduct of the United States Information Agency and other organs of Americanism. The views of Heritage, then, are no longer those of a deservedly fringe group floating on the beer money of Bircher and brewer Joe Coors.

Some time ago, the foundation embarked on A United Nations Assessment Project Study. The papers in this elegantly titled endeavor offer a depressing insight into the collective mind of the right. They allege:

§ That the United Nations Association of the United States of America, through its publicity material, supports the "semi-socialist" New International Economic Order and attempts to persuade American schoolchildren of its virtues.

§ That the association endorses the "Zionism is racism" resolution adopted by the United Nations in 1974.

§ That the government of South Africa poses no threat to international peace and is treated as a "pariah."

§ That the office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees allows and even encourages "terrorists" to operate from its camps in Honduras and the Middle East.

§ That Mark Malloch Brown, a representative of the U.N.H.C.R. in Thailand, suppressed evidence that toxic gases were used by Communist forces in Indochina.

§ That Philip Noel Baker, a British socialist and Nobel laureate, was a U.S. delegate to the founding conference of the United Nations.

§ That the Russians wanted a U.S. site for the United Nations in order to facilitate their espionage of America.

All this is pretty familiar stuff to those who have followed the John Birch Society down the years, or who have heard Republican demagogues stress the "significance" of Alger Hiss's participation in the founding of the United Nations. What is new, perhaps, is the way in which such ideas are becoming commonplace in Reagan's Washington. Painstaking efforts have been made by supporters of the U.N. Association—which is politically as mild as milk—to correct the record. They point out that Baker was a British politician who never served as a U.S. delegate to anything. They point out that even *Commentary*, in its April issue, admitted that there was no evidence at all for the scandalous story it published about Mark Malloch Brown. They point out that the responsibility for refugee camps rests with the host country and not the United Nations. They insist, quite correctly, that the association opposed the Zionism resolution of 1974 with uncharacteristic zeal. Not one of these corrections has been acknowledged or incorporated into subsequent Heritage material, which maintains its attacks on the "socialist" character of the United Nations.

Finally, in his capacity as chairman of the association, Elliot Richardson wrote to the Heritage Foundation to rebut its charges, enclosing the documents that made his case. His letter was sent to every member of the foundation's board. A good example of the response he received is the communication from Ben Blackburn, a former Representative from Georgia and former Heritage chairman, which ended thus:

> It has just come to my attention that the Heritage Foundation has been assigned to a "leading role" among "ultra right brain trusts" to act as "propagandists and slanderers" by President Reagan. There is a remarkable parallel between the intemperate nature of the comments from Tass, quoted above, and the tone of your letter. Query: Does this make you uneasy?

So it's come to this: that in the year of grace 1984, a loyal servant of Nixon and Ford can be hit with the time-dishonored amalgam technique. Is this a satisfying case of Republicans falling out, or does it make you uneasy?

* * *

Not long ago, the Heritage Foundation's *Policy Review* published a long attack on my colleague Alexander Cockburn. The piece was intended to be hurtful but was written in such a flat and petty manner as to fail in this ambition. Besides calling Alexander a dupe and a fraud and making other charges of what might be called a routine nature, it made the bizarre accusation that "his contempt for the men who created the wealth of America is only equalled by his admiration for the women who inherited it." This crack, which was borrowed from a *National Review* columnist, sacrifices wit to contrivance. Notice its suggestive internal contradiction. If the wealth these men created was America's wealth, how come their daughters have inherited it?

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ARTICLES.

BEYOND THE WASTELAND

Industrial Policy For the Left

The economic debate in this Presidential election year has quickly deteriorated to a squabble over who might raise taxes more, Mondale or Reagan. Oh yes, there are also the questions of whether the Democrats are a bunch of knockers and doomsayers and whether the G.O.P. loves deficits not wisely but too well. Even the voguish talk of "industrial policy" seems to have been left, with Hart, in San Francisco. To be sure, we'll hear more about foreign imports, the balance of trade and the flat tax before it's over, but the fundamental issues—full employment, equal opportunity and government's role in the American economy—have quietly slipped under the rug.

Last year, in hopes of stimulating a macroeconomic debate on the left, The Nation *published an article by Samuel Bowles, David M. Gordon and Thomas E. Weisskopf based on their book* Beyond the Waste Land *["'Industrial Policy'—Now the Bad News," June 4, 1983] and invited readers to comment. A number of them did so, and we have published their critiques from time to time in the past year. Herewith, the final installment of this running colloquy. As is only fair, we have given the authors of* Beyond the Waste Land *the last word.* —*The Editors*

GREGORY D. SQUIRES

With supply-side economics on the verge of total disrepute and monetarism doomed to a similar fate, industrial policy is emerging as the focus of debate in the economic development arena. While the philosophical approaches differ, the target remains the same: the sluggishness of the American economy, particularly in the older industrialized and increasingly black communities of the Frost Belt.

Another constant is the avoidance of serious debate on the condition of the nation's minority population. At best, those who construct roads to recovery attach a footnote suggesting that problems of particularly vulnerable groups (racial minorities and women) can be resolved only through economic growth. Some temporary "hardships" may have to be endured, but ultimately the rising tide will lift all boats.

Keeping to the traditional politics of growth (which, as Alan Wolfe demonstrates in his book *America's Impasse*, predates the 1980 election by decades) most policy-makers and economic analysts continue to avoid issues of distribution. But the politics of growth has encountered the economics of decline. Distribution and issues of equity can no longer be ignored.

The Economic Bill of Rights proposed by Samuel Bowles, David M. Gordon and Thomas E. Weisskopf is welcome precisely because it addresses critical political issues ignored by many industrial-policy advocates. Particularly important, they confront the issue of discrimination in the labor market. As Bowles, Gordon and Weisskopf note, many wide-ranging proposals have been offered under the rubric of industrial policy, some of which do acknowledge selected equity issues. From Felix Rohatyn's calls for a reconstruction finance corporation to serve as a public investor of last resort for ailing yet essential industries, to Lester Thurow's advocacy of incentives for "sunrise" industries and beyond, there is no shortage of candidates for successor to Reaganomics.

The common element underlying all the schemes put forth by the so-called democratic centrists like Rohatyn and Thurow, and shared by the three authors, is the recognition that government has an important and positive role to play. Market forces alone are considered insufficient to generate growth or resolve the social problems associated with unplanned growth and uneven development. "Planning" is no longer a dirty word.

Many proposals include plans to protect some of the victims of economic development, particularly workers who are displaced. But little is offered for resolving the problem of discrimination. In advocating solidarity wages, equal pay for comparable worth and equal employment opportunity, the bill of rights suggested by Bowles, Gordon and Weisskopf takes a significant step beyond the democratic centrists.

Equity issues deserve at least equal billing with growth. Among blacks, the rate of unemployment continues to be twice the rate for whites, and for other dimensions of joblessness, including poverty status, the proportion is even higher. Poverty is also feminized, as the wages of working women fall further behind those of men, with women full-time workers receiving less than 60 cents for every dollar made by men. If Mondale is to get any help from Jesse Jackson in the fall, he must explicitly address the concerns of the minority population.

Economic growth, of course, facilitates the achievement of any social goal. But as the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights detailed in its 1982 report "Unemployment and Underemployment Among Blacks, Hispanics, and Women," those three groups experience higher levels of unemployment, intermittent employment, involuntary part-time employment and other job difficulties than do white males, even in industries and regions of the country experiencing economic growth.

Although President Reagan complained that the commission was taking "potshots" at his civil rights policies and attempted to fire the commissioners responsible for them, the report's criticisms remain valid. Representative Augustus F. Hawkins opened a 1983 Congressional hearing on the Fed-

Gregory D. Squires is an associate professor of sociology at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, and edits The Journal of Intergroup Relations.

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eral government's equal employment opportunity enforcement efforts with the following statement:

> Over the last two years we have witnessed what appears to be an effort to undermine the gains which minorities and women have made toward achieving equal employment opportunity, and to destroy the tools which have made those limited gains possible.

Budget cuts and subsequent staff reductions have crippled civil rights enforcement efforts, with the Office of the Federal Contract Compliance Programs (the agency empowered to insure that Federal contractors provide equal opportunity) losing more than one-third of its field staff. The Administration's rejection of results-oriented, numerically based remedies for violations of Federal law, and other deregulation proposals under review, promise the continuation of discriminatory employment patterns.

Whatever economic policies rise from the ashes of the supply-side and monetarist pyres, they will have serious implications for racial minorities and women. Whether that impact will be positive or negative depends on the extent to which equity issues are confronted.

Affirmative action is no substitute for economic growth or more democratic economic structures and relations. But economic growth, even coupled with more democratic economic and social forms, provides no assurances that equal opportunity for racial minorities and women will prevail. Race- and sex-conscious remedies are essential as well.

An economic bill of rights along the lines proposed by Bowles, Gordon and Weisskopf is necessary for the economic, social and political health of the nation and for its historic victims of discrimination. □

KIM MOODY

Bowles, Gordon and Weisskopf have made an important point about the type of industrial policy now in vogue among Democratic politicians. All too often, discussions of corporatist planning by leftists display a sort of "after Rohatyn, us" attitude. In fact, as the authors of *Beyond the Waste Land* argue, the planning ideas of Felix Rohatyn and other liberal corporatists pose a threat to the democratic process. The distinction between government intervention in the economy and, as Rohatyn writes, "the involvement, some would say the intrusion, of the private sector in government" needs to be taken seriously.

Corporatist planning, however, is not the only bad news on the industrial policy front. The Western European experience with planning has not gone well. While the *Nation* article adapted from Bowles, Gordon and Weisskopf's book was too compact to show it, their Economic Bill of Rights is drawn from European models. Their concept of negotiated planning is essentially German. That of the various investment funds is Swedish. The proposals for union and worker representation on planning boards are drawn from Sweden and France. Indeed, the existence of pluralist planning institutions among the Western democracies provides the authors with an argument for their practicality "within the existing constitutional and political framework of the United States." The problem is, those precedents are not working much better in Europe than Reaganomics is here.

The existence of planning mechanisms has neither prevented nor resolved the economic crisis in Europe. Productivity rates slumped throughout the 1970s in most European economies, while unemployment increased (in France and West Germany it has hovered at U.S. levels of nearly 10 percent since 1980). Traditional industries such as steel and auto have faced painful restructuring, sometimes devastating towns or whole regions. West Germany's steel-producing Ruhr Valley provides a dramatic example. Capital has tended toward speculative investment domestically or overseas, despite government controls and incentives.

The advanced welfare systems of most Western European nations have staved off extreme poverty, hunger and despair—and that is no small thing. But rather than the planners democratically blunting the dynamics of crisis, the crisis has confounded the planners. The degree of labor, consumer or public participation in the planning does not seem to make much difference to the success of their plans. Perhaps that is because their schemes are not democratic. At the top levels they involve highly bureaucratic organizations (unions, corporations, government) scarcely affected by membership will. Planning through pluralist but bureaucratic agencies in economies dominated by the private sector has not substantially modified negative trends or been able to guide the restructuring process. As with the German steel industry, it is the planning process that adapts to the restructuring.

In time, the failure of planning affects the welfare state as well. France's Socialist government had to abandon its "wage-led" strategy, which resulted in a flood of imported consumer goods and actually contributed to unemployment. The national debt required to support the welfare state in a period of crisis has exploded in recent years. Sweden's active labor market policy, the most effective in Europe, has created deficits of U.S. proportions, forcing Olof Palme's Social Democratic government to turn toward austerity. The topic of discussion in left parliamentary circles in Europe is about the orderly shrinking of the welfare state, not its expansion.

The power of privately owned multinational corporations operating in a highly integrated world economy has undermined "indicative planning," which relies on incentives and negotiated agreements rather than compulsion. World capital markets can outbid the state in incentives and subsidies and outmaneuver state controls. Writing about France in the Spring 1983 issue of *Dissent*, Lewis Coser aptly observed:

> Socialists agreed after the Russian disaster that it is impossible to build "socialism in one country." The French situation now leads one to raise the question whether it is even possible to build an advanced welfare state in one country.

Kim Moody is director of the Labor Education and Research Project and is a staff writer for its publication, "Labor Notes."

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The current limited discussion of industrial policy on the left must open up to take account of the crisscrossing facts of private ownership and the global character of the economy. Although they present many interesting, supportable proposals in *Beyond the Waste Land*, Bowles, Gordon and Weisskopf have not gone beyond the framework of post-World War II European social democracy, and that framework is coming undone.

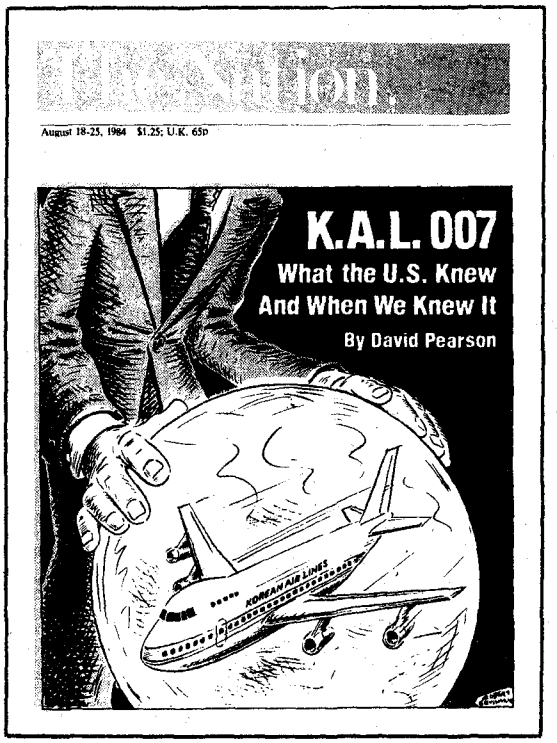
The other framework of economic planning, that of the bureaucratic states of Eastern Europe, is also coming undone. As in the West, the unfolding of economic crisis is uneven: it is more apparent in Poland than in the Soviet Union, for instance. Nevertheless, bureaucratic planning in Eastern states has proved inefficient. It is the accumulation of inefficiency that is at the root of their trend toward stagnation. Far from going beyond the wasteland of capitalism, those economies have simply provided an alternative model of waste. In doing so they have put the old socialist idea of social ownership of industry in disrepute.

So we have come to the point where public ownership of industry is equated with bureaucratic inefficiency (and political repression), while "democratic planning" is equated with continued private ownership. If we must choose between those alternatives, we are sunk. Without social ownership, planning comes unraveled; without democracy, planning becomes inefficient. In both cases stagnation takes over, and austerity becomes the soul of economic policy.

What the American left needs is a vision that draws together democracy, planning *and* social ownership. That, of course, is socialism. But socialism is not on the political agenda right now, and that is why radical economists come up with elaborate programs that seem practical "within the existing constitutional and political framework of the United States." As the debate over industrial policy unfolds in the United States it will become apparent to many that the approach embodied in the Bowles, Gordon, Weisskopf proposal has not worked elsewhere. Score another point for Felix Rohatyn or the far right, which is developing its own version of industrial policy. The failure of Keynesian policy cost the liberals dearly. Let's not make the same mistake by running with a loser again.

So what do we do? First we clarify our vision. It ought to be socialist (social ownership) and it must be democratic (control from below). Second, we need a means by which such a vision begins to seem achievable. Mass movements, based in the working class, among minority groups, women, the peace and other issue-oriented movements, set political agendas. Insofar as they embrace aspects of a leftist vision they give it reality. Part of the left's job is to bring a clear vision of socialist democracy to these movements. Mass movements have a way of creating the stuff of democracy and of bringing the future a lot closer.

Next, we need a simple, practical program that activists in various movements can share a need and desire for. It will fall far short of our vision, but it should flow from it. The creation of a genuinely productive public sector providing jobs for millions is a start. In the "Steel Valley" region of Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia, the Tri-State Con-



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ference on Steel has projected a nonbureaucratic, democratically controlled model of industrial development and job creation in the public sector which has already gained significant labor and community support. Such a concept of decentralized development and job creation could easily be applied to other industries and regions. Even if imperfectly implemented, such a program would offer hope to the jobless, greater bargaining power for unions (on the defensive partly because of high unemployment) and an opportunity to put affirmative action into effect.

Finally, we need a near-term political strategy that is new in relationship to what we have today. To put it another way, if we are to move beyond the corporatism of the Democrats, we will have to move beyond the Democratic Party itself; we need a new party. That requires independent political action wherever and whenever possible. Two, three, many Burlingtons. Ultimately, the left has to win the labor movement to this political strategy if it is to have the social and organizational weight to break through the two-party stranglehold. We need a fundamentally new political realignment, not just another shuffling of the electorate between the two poles of despair.

The left in America today seems to be without a political strategy or vision, so it has begun to debate programs. By default, the socialist left in America is becoming a rather disorganized Fabian Society, hoping to influence those within reach of political power. The day-to-day work of thousands of socialists in the labor and social movements appears less and less informed by a political vision independent of liberalism. In some respects the left is growing. But lacking an independent vision, it is also becoming more invisible.

Bowles, Gordon and Weisskopf have provided us with parts of a vision: planning by needs allocation and the importance of democracy are relevant. But they haven't pointed toward a political strategy. Respectability by precedent is no substitute for a politics that goes beyond liberalism-in-retreat. At this point in the development of such a politics, programs should be judged more on their ability to rally and inspire people than on their ability to influence power brokers. Ultimately the Economic Bill of Rights focuses too much on its own internal logic and too little on the more difficult job of political mobilization to guide us beyond the wasteland. □

JONATHON SIMON

After reading *Beyond the Waste Land* I was filled with mixed emotions. The need for a systematic economic plan in response to Reaganomics is undoubtedly crucial, and the ideas for a "democratic alternative" expressed by Bowles, Gordon and Weisskopf go far beyond anything the Democratic Party will propose, even in a time of economic crisis. Although I am reluctant to exemplify the sad truth that progressive people and organizations are often the most virulent critics of "leftist" programs, I am still forced to say that the plan is fundamentally flawed.

Who do the authors think runs the government in the 1980s? What leads them to believe that a populist strategy of mass mobilization can bring about transformations in the power structure? Their policy recommendations create an extraordinarily large role for the government to play in "democratizing" America. They suggest that more than thirty-five major pieces of legislation be enacted. These range from the possible (increased funding for libraries and cultural centers) to the highly improbable (nationalization of the financial sector and all military production).

Bowles, Gordon and Weisskopf expect that a government with a long history of antiunion activity, which has repeatedly used the police and military to break strikes and discipline workers, will turn around and create a Union Organizing Campaign Fund. This government-supported union expansion would be aided by a Corporate Disclosure Act designed to equalize access to information and thus bargaining power at the negotiating table. Longtime corporate strategies employing secrecy, information control and divide-and-rule tactics will fall away with the drying of the ink on a legislative bill. Come on, guys, who are you kidding? There isn't broad-based support for unions even among the working class. The systematic and long-term campaign to discredit labor unions in the United States, aided by the well-reported internal corruption and undemocratic nature of some large unions, has taken its toll.

If we agree that one of the major functions of the state is to insure an increased rate of capital formation, and that in order to do that it must have the confidence of the business community, then there is a strong likelihood that the implementation of Bowles, Gordon and Weisskopf's proposals would be met with a capital strike and widespread capital flight.

The defenses the authors erect against this challenge are weak. Their point that money and management move whereas machines and labor remain is naïve. Have they forgotten the standard ploy of mobile capital: allowing machinery to run down without proper maintenance or regular renewal in order to maximize profits before fleeing a location? Such decapitalization through nonrenewal of fixed capital assets is rational in a profit maximization system. Capitalists can flee whenever they choose. Unless the government seized most of the productive capacity of the country at the outset of the program, workers would assume ownership of rusty, outmoded equipment. Public investments would have to recapitalize major segments of industry, not just meet some minor shortfalls in operating capital, as the authors suggest. Meanwhile, unless restrictive barriers were imposed, inexpensive General Motors cars would roll off Brazilian assembly lines, swamping the U.S. market.

To ameliorate the disruptive effects of capital flight the authors look to public control of the banks. But even with public control of the financial sector, corporations have

Jonathon Simon is a community organizer in the San Francisco Bay area and is a graduate student in the School for Public Health at the University of California, Berkeley.

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found ways to circumvent financial regulations. The use of wholly owned foreign subsidiaries as profit accumulation centers frees U.S. corporations from many financial restrictions. Cargill's Panamanian subsidiary, Tradex, is a good example. Smuggling currency out of the country could undermine financial regulations. Numbered Swiss bank accounts are full of money spirited out of countries with strict currency regulations. Ask the Mitterrand government about that.

The matter of public control of the financial sector (a nice euphemism for nationalization) leads us back to my first question: How do Bowles, Gordon and Weisskopf view the state? It is tremendously unlikely that the state would be able, or even willing, to try to alter fundamental power relations in American society. Legislators are elected largely as a result of their success at generating the financial resources necessary to run a campaign. Unless the candidate has independent means, that money usually comes from big capitalists. It also comes with strings attached.

The authors claim they are offering a program for the 1980s, and they present it as an institutional transformation emerging from the current economic crisis. But soft-selling the nationalization of the commanding heights of the economy with euphemistic phrases and avoiding the word "socialism" won't fool conservative critics. Nor do they address the primary problem of political education in this country. We must begin by changing the notion that "socialism" is a bad word. For sixty years it has been excluded from the mainstream political vocabulary by a vicious campaign of misinformation, distortion and Red-baiting, to the point where no major-party candidate dares attach such notions to his or her campaign. It is the kiss of death in U.S. politics, profoundly differentiating us from Europeans.

Although I focus on those things that constrain the government from acting in the interests of the majority and on the existing power relations between business and the rest of society, I don't mean to say the authors' program is worthless. It has considerable value, just not much likelihood of implementation.

They are absolutely correct that certain sectors of the economy will have to be nationalized in order for the American people to attain some control over their economic destiny. Without such changes we are damned to continue muddling along and paying the high human cost of our present economic irrationality. Maybe a few more failures along the lines of Lockheed, Chrysler and Continental-Illinois Bank will raise the bailout costs too high for the rest of the economy to bear and will bring about the nationalization of other production sectors. As it is, the costs of improving the country's infrastructure are largely socialized. The risks and costs are prohibitive for the private sector, and the results are seen as social goods even when the vast majority of the benefits accrue to a small segment of society. However, nationalization of the financial sector is a whole different ball game; it destroys the foundation of private wealth and power. I just can't see the Rockefellers handing over control. Sorry, no way.

Although the United States has no major political party that addresses progressive and labor issues on a national scale, there is a lot of local organizing going on. Many of the planks of the Bowles, Gordon, Weisskopf platform emerge from struggles being waged throughout the country. While democracy may be terminally ill in Congress, it is alive and kicking in Youngstown, Ohio, where steelworkers tried to buy a closed steel mill; in Minnesota, where family farmers are getting some protection; in Wisconsin, where the state-owned State Life Fund provides low-cost life insurance; and in communities across the land that are declaring themselves nuclear-free zones. To see an analysis of many of these locally generated strategies and tactics between book covers helps alleviate the frustration many feel under the Reagan onslaught. It shows that a great amount of organizing for progressive social change is going on in this country and points to areas for cooperation and coalitions in the future.

The program drafted in *Beyond the Waste Land* puts the ideas together, integrates them in a cohesive network and lays out a partial agenda for discussions among workers, organizers, activists and the unemployed. Populism and legislative reformism aren't the limits of our methods. In corporate America in the 1980s we can't depend on them alone. We need to develop additional strategies to democratize the United States. As former Wobbly, union organizer and singer/songwriter U. Utah Phillips said, "If voting could change the system, they'd make it illegal." □

SAMUEL BOWLES, DAVID M. GORDON AND THOMAS E. WEISSKOPF

Debate about progressive economic programs has sharpened during the past year. The discussion of our book in the pages of *The Nation* reflects a mounting concern on the left about strategies for transforming a capitalist economy.

Having suffered the longest and deepest recession of the postwar period, the United States is bobbing in the wake of a harshly inequitable, uneven and wasteful recovery. The "economic issue" may have been muted by insipid Presidential campaign politics, but the economy continues to afflict and oppress millions.

In *Beyond the Waste Land* we argue that the mobilization of progressive forces for a comprehensive, medium-term program for economic recovery is an urgent priority. Many on the left appear to share that view. Those who differ raise two main concerns.

Some argue that all reindustrialization and industrial policy schemes are likely to preserve privilege and reinforce sexual and racial inequalities in the work force because they

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Samuel Bowles, David M. Gordon and Thomas E. Weisskopf, the authors of Beyond the Waste Land: A Democratic Alternative to Economic Decline *(Anchor/Doubleday), are professors of economics at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, the New School for Social Research and the University of Michigan, respectively.*

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do nothing for women and minority workers, and that promotion of growth will further compound environmental waste and devastation. They even question whether the traditional demand for full employment is an appropriate objective of progressive economic strategy.

Some also contend that all medium-term progressive economic programs are naïve and based on the delusion that the capitalist state is responsive to popular pressures. Their assessment of the constraints on government policy leads them to exhort us not to divert ourselves from the overriding task of building a movement that will work for a democratic, feminist and socialist transformation. Many on the left are also worried about the lack of a clear political agenda in progressive economic proposals; there is concern that such proposals are being imposed on grass-roots movements and that a coherent strategy for galvanizing broad-based mobilization has not yet emerged.

Those are important concerns. Let us deal with them in order.

We agree that a progressive economic program must not aim simply at rapid economic growth or full employment. Growth can be wasteful, and full employment may provide killing jobs at indecent wages. We agree, in particular, that some progressive proponents of industrial policy have not sufficiently addressed the problems of millions of women and minority workers who are trapped in low-wage, dead-end jobs in the nonunionized and/or service sectors of the economy.

But it is a mistake to reduce economic discussions on the left to a debate on the merits of industrial policy. As we have argued, a truly progressive policy could build on a dual strategy of assuring the right to a decent job and building toward what we call wage-led productivity growth. Rather than describe our objective as full employment—which implicitly emphasizes economic growth above other considerations—we emphasize the *right to a decent job* and call for a companion strategy to raise productivity per hour of work. The key to increased productivity is better pay for workers, which means eliminating the racial, sexual and other forms of discrimination that keep wages down and thus perpetuate the low-productivity sectors of the economy. Labor-law reform, to help unorganized workers overcome barriers to unionization, and a substantial increase in the minimum wage should join equal pay for comparable worth and affirmative action at the *core* of progressive proposals.

We advocate those policies not only because they are just but because they would help stimulate productivity. Productivity growth is essential because:

§ It provides the bounty necessary for increased educational and cultural opportunity, more adequate health care and a generally higher living standard.

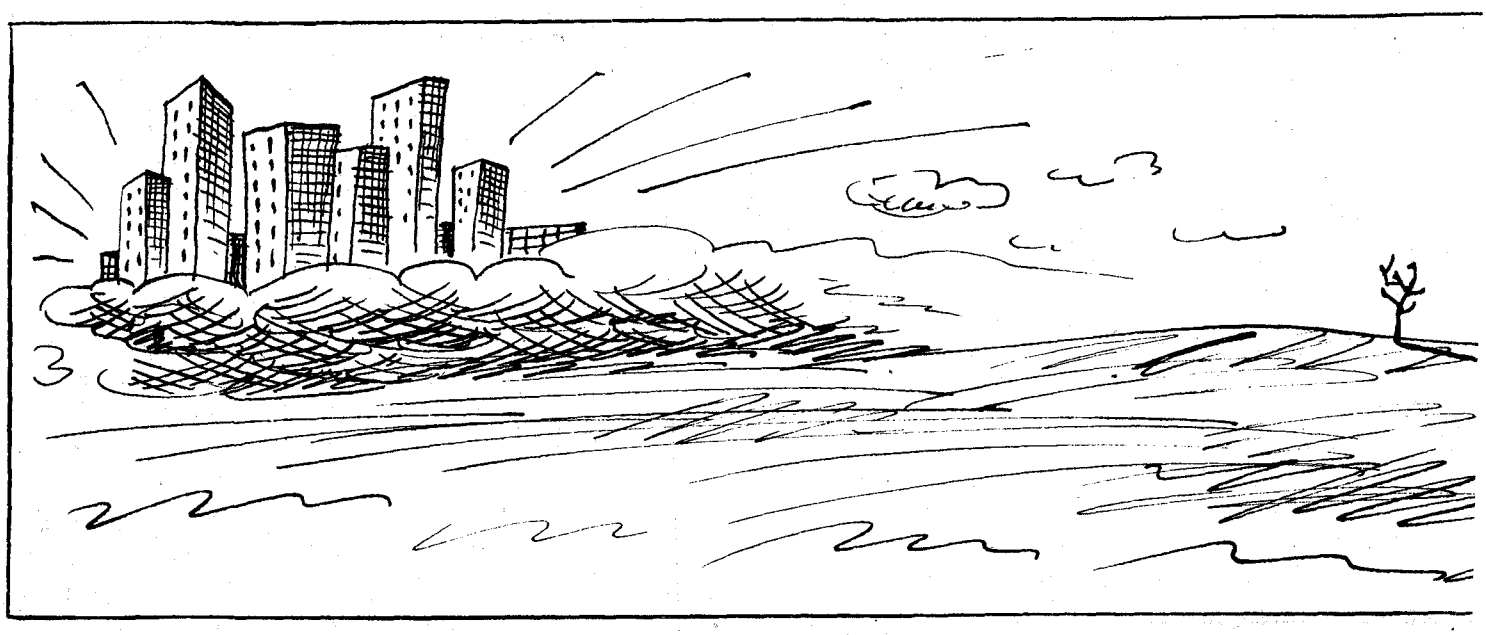
§ It makes possible wage equalization from the bottom up and avoids politically divisive reductions in the wages of higher-paid workers.

§ It permits people to reduce their working time without sacrificing their material welfare.

§ It allows us to envision alternatives to the environmentally destructive, resource-gobbling way of life in this country by making the expansion of free time a realistic objective and a viable alternative to compulsive consumerism.

Aside from improving productivity, a wage-led and wage-equalization economic strategy would remove some obstacles to the transformation of the family, and especially of child-care roles, by making part-time work and therefore joint parenting more feasible, and by removing the economic incentive for the traditionally high-earning male to focus primarily on wage work and the low-earning female to focus primarily on child care.

It is therefore wrong to suggest that our program offers nothing to women, minority groups or the poor. The guarantee of a decent and adequately paid job, at home or at a workplace, is an essential part of any economic blueprint for a more egalitarian as well as a more prosperous society. Productivity growth need not benefit only privileged white males; quite the contrary, the elimination of white male privilege is a prerequisite for productivity growth precisely, as we have argued, because wage equalization would dramatically enhance both individual and ag-



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gregate productivity. And while income support is a necessary part of any economic strategy, advocates of increased income support for the poor should not be at loggerheads with advocates of jobs programs. Providing a job for every person who wants one will help produce the additional income necessary to finance much more adequate income support without requiring tax increases.

Now for the second category of objections. A recurring argument is that our program has, as Jonathon Simon says, "just not much likelihood of implementation." We agree that this is an important issue, but we think its political implications have been misstated by some critics.

Obviously we cannot affect policy in the United States simply by appealing to policy-makers in Washington. There can be no question that we need clear, focused, coherent and militant mobilization among rank-and-file and grass-roots constituencies in order to bring about fundamental change. To say that much is easy.

The hard part is figuring out how to promote such mobilization. Here, critics like Simon and Kim Moody are somewhat less helpful.

On the one hand they say potential progressive constituencies need short-term goals to fight for (and, at least sometimes, achieve): in Moody's words, "we need a simple, practical program that activists in various movements can share a need and desire for." But at the same time they say we need to perform the kind of political education that would help change the notion of what needs to be fought for, and ultimately won: in Simon's words, we must overcome the prevailing belief that " 'socialism' is a bad word."

We fully agree on both points. The critical question is how we move forward.

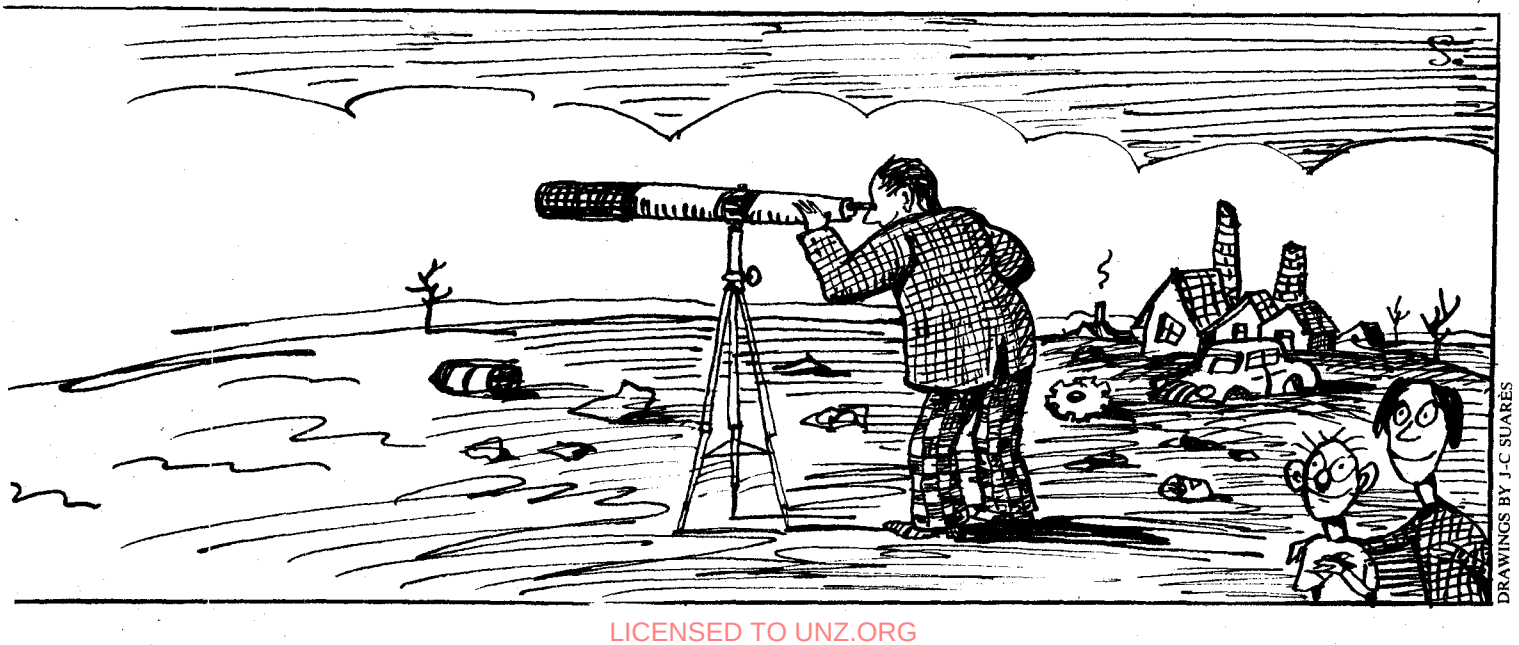
Many different groups in the United States are burdened by economic problems. Many are already struggling to deal with those problems—at the bargaining table, through community organizing, in the electoral arena. But activists themselves complain that they face two major barriers to their work: almost all mainstream economists and policy-makers advocate trickle-down prosperity; and grass-roots groups that accept this approach assume they must fight one another for the crumbs of a shrinking economic pie.

We have therefore concluded that a necessary condition for progress in mass-based mobilization is an economic analysis and program that offers an alternative to trickle-down economics and provides the opportunity to break out of the straitjacket of mainstream policy by unifying the economic interests of popular groups. Like others, we have sought to provide that kind of analysis and program.

A wage-led productivity growth strategy, in particular, can provide a significant boost to progressive coalition-building. Not everyone agrees, of course, but we think that one source for the continuing disagreements within the left is the hold of mainstream economic thought. Many economists still accept the textbook fallacy that there is only a limited amount of goods to go around; thus, more for you means less for me—what we have called the zero-sum illusion. Wage-led productivity growth can transcend the alleged necessity for trade-offs among economic prosperity, economic security, egalitarianism and environmental protection. Our approach links economic security with dramatic reductions in sexism, racism, inequality and ecological damage. Far from being incompatible with critical social goals, the right kind of economic recovery is crucial for our chances of achieving them.

When people begin to shake off the zero-sum illusion they acquire an ideological weapon against a "beggar-thy-neighbor" mentality. A progressive economic program can help persuade members of a variety of constituencies of the plausibility and possibility of advancement toward both economic security and justice. If fairness and efficiency do not conflict, then the interests of one constituency in a potential coalition need not necessarily conflict with those of any other.

We don't believe for a moment that an economic analysis and program is *sufficient* as a foundation for political mobilization. But in our political work, we have found that it is not only helpful but critical.



DRAWINGS BY J-C SUARÈS

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And America cannot afford shortcuts. Moody argues for "a genuinely productive public sector providing jobs for millions" as "a start." Fair enough. But what about unionized workers who are facing concession demands by management? Or women and blacks struggling against sexism and racism in the private sector? Or the chaos and devastation of reigning energy policies? Or the tradition of letting the Federal Reserve Board protect us from inflation by dousing the economy with cold water? Or military costs that are soaring out of control?

We think there is a richer and wider variety of economic concerns in this country than a simple jobs or income-maintenance program can usefully or fruitfully address. And we reject the notion that popular constituencies cannot grasp more complex or comprehensive economic analyses and programs. Our own political and educational work persuades us that people are not only quick to appreciate the structure of an alternative analysis but are excited by the opportunity to view the world in a substantially different way.

Yes, the other side has the political power. But a full-bodied progressive economic program can help arm people with both the consciousness and the solidarity necessary to change the balance of power. Moreover, there is no reason that the struggle for an economic program must divert us from the long-term goal of building a socialist movement in the United States. Socialist consciousness will develop as people intensify their struggles to meet their immediate needs, and as those struggles prompt the ruling elite to resist further progress.

Any substantial progress toward even the modest objectives we have outlined might well provoke a reaction from business leaders, as Simon suggests. While in the short run they would benefit from the increased demand for goods and services, in the long run they might find the growing unity of workers and others ominous. If under those conditions they refused to invest, a realistic economic program would have to move ahead to expand public investment to maintain the dynamism of the economy.

Indeed, such a dynamic of radicalization is the essential link between our medium-term economic program and the long-term objective of socialist transformation. A unified and democratic movement pursuing an egalitarian and democratic growth strategy would eventually begin to challenge the rules of the capitalist game. This challenge would develop not only because a democratic, egalitarian and humane future demands it but, more immediately, because the trip out of the current economic debacle on the capitalist railroad is bound to have a crushing political and economic cost for most people—not only in the United States but throughout the world. Either we accept the capitalist rules as sacrosanct and endure the costs or we begin to rip off the straitjacket that those rules impose. The American left can best prepare for those challenges if it equips itself with a clear and appealing alternative.

We conclude that a comprehensive, medium-term economic bill of rights can help to mobilize and unify progressive constituencies in the 1980s and to support movement toward a democratic and socialist United States in the 1990s and beyond. We look forward to the opportunity to work with economists, activists and others in continuing to develop a program fully adequate to that task. □

ANTI-OBSCENITY ORDINANCES

Banning Porn: The New Censorship

LOIS P. SHEINFELD

On the evening of July 10, a 23-year-old Minneapolis woman doused herself with gasoline and set herself aflame to protest pornography. She was taken to the hospital in critical condition. Three days later, the Minneapolis City Council passed a package of antipornography legislation.

The legislation included a censorship ordinance condemning pornography on the theory that it violated the civil rights of women. That ordinance was the product of an intensive antipornography campaign mounted by two feminists, Catharine MacKinnon, associate professor at the University of Minnesota Law School, and Andrea Dworkin, a New York City-based writer. Last year MacKinnon and Dworkin drafted a similar ordinance and persuaded the City Council to adopt it on December 30, following highly emotional legislative hearings. On January 5, Mayor Donald M. Fraser vetoed that ordinance. "The remedy sought through the ordinance as drafted is neither appropriate nor enforceable within our cherished tradition and constitutionally protected right of free speech," he said.

Assisted by MacKinnon, an unlikely marriage of feminists and members of the Moral Majority secured the passage of corresponding legislation in Indianapolis on May 1. An hour after Mayor William H. Hudnut signed the measure into law, it was challenged in Federal court on First Amendment and other constitutional grounds. A decision by U.S. District Court Judge Sarah Evans Barker is expected soon, and the case is being watched closely by a number of other cities—including Minneapolis, where Mayor Fraser also vetoed the July 13 ordinance.

Repudiation of the free speech principles of the First Amendment marks the current antipornography campaign as the new censorship. Under the banner of civil rights, its proponents seek to suppress free expression by state proscription of books, magazines, films, plays and the visual arts. The dangers implicit in this recourse to governmental monitoring are dramatically revealed in Censorship: 500 Years of Conflict, a major exhibit at the New York City Public Library which, in an extraordinary display of books, prints and manuscripts, traces five centuries of official repression of ideas and information.

Lois P. Sheinfeld, an attorney, is an associate professor of journalism and mass communications at New York University.

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Through the First Amendment's guarantees of freedom of speech and of the press, the framers of the Constitution sought to prevent control of thought and expression. "The main purpose of [these] constitutional provisions is to prevent all such previous restraints upon publications as had been practised by other governments." So held the Supreme Court more than fifty years ago in *Near v. Minnesota*, striking down a Minnesota law censoring books and magazines.

Unless it can be factually demonstrated that speech causes severe harm, the First Amendment denies to any official the power to decide what people may or may not see and hear. The public, not the government, determines the acceptability and value of ideas. "Fear of serious injury cannot alone justify suppression of free speech. . . . Men feared witches and burnt women," warned Justice Louis Brandeis.

While some assert that pornography causes rape and other acts of criminal sexual violence, the existing evidence does not support that view. After extensive investigations, both the President's Commission on Obscenity and Pornography and the British Committee on Obscenity and Film Censorship concluded that there was no reliable evidence connecting pornography and crime. Since the publication of their reports, in 1970 and 1979 respectively, the state of the evidence has not changed. A leading opponent of pornography, Ernest van den Haag, professor at the Fordham University Law School, recently said: "There have been studies on the connection between pornography and sexual aggression, but none serious. If I had any statistics, believe me, I would use them."

It is therefore not surprising that the new antipornography ordinances abandon reliance on the serious-harm exception to the First Amendment and instead categorically declare pornography a violation of women's civil rights. They define pornography as the "graphic, sexually explicit subordination of women, whether in pictures or in words," including pictures or words by which women are presented as sexual objects for domination or conquest, as sexually submissive or as degraded or inferior in a sexual context.

Under those vague, overreaching provisions, a charge of pornography could easily be leveled at the poems of Charles Baudelaire, John Donne and Anne Sexton; the books and stories of Doris Lessing, Mary McCarthy, John le Carré and even Andrea Dworkin; many if not all of Marilyn Monroe's films; the plays *Hurlyburly* by David Rabe, *One for the Road* by Harold Pinter and *Noises Off* by Michael Frayn—and so forth ad infinitum.

And why draw the line at sexually explicit material? Under a civil rights theory, the requirement of sexual explicitness is superfluous. If these ordinances are constitutional, any material depicting the subordination of women could be labeled discriminatory and could therefore be suppressed. The censorship possibilities are staggering.

Admittedly, other provisions in the ordinances are aimed more narrowly at depictions of violent sexual acts against women. I find such depictions repulsive. But in this country we have witnessed attempts to ban *Ms.* and *A Doll's House* because some people found the feminist views expressed in them repulsive. We cannot permit a popular vote at any particular time or place to override the First Amendment right to free expression.

Censorship is not advocated by everyone who opposes pornography, and antipornography censorship is not supported by all feminists. As a feminist, I am troubled by a campaign that exalts book-burning in the name of women's rights. Official repression of disfavored expression places all expression, and essential liberty, in jeopardy. Without fidelity to the constitutional commands that assure open and free discourse, the struggle for sexual equality itself is at risk.

Stifling speech cannot advance women's rights, nor can violent martyrdom. Of the attempted suicide in Minneapolis Catharine MacKinnon said: "Women feel very desperate about the existence of pornography. This doesn't single her out. People make choices on how" to express their anger. This pronouncement is simply irresponsible. The young woman's self-immolation was heartbreaking, and I grieve for her. But her "choice" must be unequivocally rejected, lest it encourage other young people to pursue causes—good or bad—by senseless, self-destructive means. □

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Political Dilemma

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

atically warped in army indoctrination centers. Their pride and spirit are broken, and they are put together again as obedient automatons capable of killing their own parents without flinching if told by a superior officer that they are communists. From interviews with former soldiers and survivors of Guatemalan Army massacres, I knew that *kaibiles* make a practice of drinking their victims' blood; the brains might have been removed as part of some atavistic ritual known only to themselves, or to introduce a heightened dimension of terror into the refugee camps, and thereby speed up the relocation of refugees from the border areas.

When I asked the director how the townspeople felt about the preferential treatment accorded the refugees in the hospital, he assured me that no Mexican had ever been turned away because of overcrowding by the Guatemalans, and then added: "Unfortunately, a process of demonization is taking place in our midst. Townspeople say the Guatemalans are destroying the forest and taking work away from Mexican laborers. And the Ladino [non-Indian] landowners worry that refugees will spark uprisings among discontented Indians in highland villages and in the poorer jungle settlements, where the Guatemalans have been sympathetically received."

The tensions within Chiapas's Indian and Ladino populations are being exploited by the Mexican government's hard-line Minister of the Interior, Manuel Bartlett, who is concerned that the camps have been infiltrated by guerrillas and has ordered that 46,000 refugees be relocated to Campeche and other northern states of the Yucatán Peninsula. The Interior Ministry and immigration authorities have steadfastly refused to grant legal status to the Guatemalan camp residents. Instead, they are issued renewable ninety-day permits as "border visitors." The move north, which many outside Mexico fear may be the first step toward the refugees' eventual repatriation, has the blessing of the U.S. government, which favors "containing" the refugees in the interior or returning them to Guatemala, where thousands face almost certain death or forced internment in militarized camps cynically named "model villages."

About 10,000 Guatemalans from at least twelve of the eighty refugee camps were scheduled to be relocated to Campeche before the September torrential rains paralyze operations. In late June Puerto Rico camp, with over 5,000 refugees, was razed by workers for the Comisión Mexicana de Asistencia a los Refugiados (COMAR), which distributes supplies provided by the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees; about 1,000 camp residents were then moved north. But another 3,500 fled across the Lacantún River and encamped deeper inside the Lacandon jungle. Sources in the Roman Catholic diocese of San Cristobal say the situation of these "re-refugees" is desperate: their food supplies were cut off by COMAR, and they are exposed to the rains without tools or housing materials.

The refugee question has extended beyond the local concerns of Chiapas and is affecting every aspect of Mexican society: economic, social, religious and international. It is highlighting the contradictions in Mexico's domestic and foreign policies, as the nation struggles with its worst economic crisis in decades. The upshot has been a dramatic rightward shift in the government's attitude toward the refugees, spearheaded by Interior Minister Bartlett, and a reexamination of its Central America policies, provoked partly by the Reagan Administration's threat of economic sanctions and by Congress's wielding of the Simpson-Mazzoli big stick to stanch the flow of undocumented Mexican immigrants into the United States. The prospect of a large influx of "feet people" from El Salvador and Guatemala has preoccupied the U.S. National Security Council for the past year, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service has drawn up detailed plans for giant detention camps to be erected in remote areas of the United States. They are designed to house tens of thousands of refugees, who would be effectively isolated from existing legal services.

One ominous indication of Mexico's hardening position is COMAR's harsh treatment of the 3,500 Guatemalans who fled Puerto Rico camp. The commission had cut off distribution of food to the camp when it was earmarked for relocation and not only refuses to send aid to them in the jungle but has interfered with church distribution efforts. COMAR is sending the supplies instead to three new sites in Campeche's sparsely settled Valley of Edzná, a region of mosquito plagues and intense heat, where water is scarce and malaria endemic.

In another recent development, Televisa, an independent Mexican network, sent reporters from *Sesenta Minutos* (Mexico's *Sixty Minutes*) to San Cristobal to investigate rumors that the refugee camp administered by the Catholic diocese there is riddled with proselytizing Protestants. Several priests I talked to complained that reporters questioned them abusively. They also charged that the journalists teamed up with immigration agents to attempt to persuade refugees to admit falsely that they were agents of North American evangelical sects which are carrying out a massive campaign to convert Catholic Indian communties in Guatemala and Mexico. This was apparently a stratagem to embarrass the popular, embattled Bishop of San Cristobal, Samuel Ruiz, whose staunch support for persecuted Indians places him in a direct line of descent from San Cristobal's first Bishop, the saintly Bartolomé de las Casas. In late June and early July, two nuns and a doctor who worked in refugee relief efforts for the diocese were detained by government agents and subjected to intense interrogations about the Bishop's activities and his "guerrilla connections." The Bishop of Campeche diocese, in contrast, is known to be an ultraconservative, and local offi-

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Victor Perera is co-author, with Robert Bruce, of The Last Lords of Palenque: The Lacandon Mayas of the Mexican Rain Forest *(Little, Brown). His* A Guatemalan Boyhood *will be published by Schocken next spring.*

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cials are cooperating fully with the national government's policy on the refugees.

The state of Chiapas, whose border with Guatemala was fixed only 100 years ago, is the loose cannon in the Mexican federation. Its independent character is dramatized by periodic revolts of the highland Chamulas and other Mayan Indian communities. The refugees' presence makes the state even harder to pin down for oil exploration and the ambitious development schemes of technocrats in Mexico City, who have been diverted in their zeal to close off the Guatemalan border. If they have not succeeded in Mexicanizing the highland Maya groups in more than a century, they fret, what chance is there of acculturating over 100,000 Indians from the neighboring highlands of Guatemala? Most of the refugees I have spoken with in border camps and elsewhere recognize the necessity of relocating farther inland, but not as far as Campeche, where the scattered Indian settlements cannot offer them the cultural and moral support they received from kindred Mayan communities along the Chiapas/Guatemala border.

Admittedly, Mexico's problem is a difficult and delicate one and deserves international understanding and support; but thus far all attempts at a humane solution have become enmeshed in the country's internal schisms and factional disputes. These are exacerbated by the bullying tactics of the Guatemalan military, which threatens to boycott the Contadora negotiations to achieve peace in Central America, and by President Reagan's game plan in the region, which favors a docile Mexico bogged down by internal problems rather than a strong one capable of playing an independent regional role. Mexican officials, who feel their predicament is misunderstood by the international press, complain that the accumulating pressures on the country's economy and its democratic institutions are making the scrupulous observance of humanitarian conventions in regard to the refugees a Sisyphean undertaking. Ultimately, the largest casualty of Mexico's rigidity on the refugee question could be its leverage in the Contadora process, which cannot succeed without Mexico's moral leadership and libertarian tradition.

If the government maintains its present course in Chiapas, a worsening of the refugees' plight seems inevitable. Reports from the approximately 10,000 refugees already in Campeche about the rigidly controlled living conditions, the scarcity of resources, the inflexible conservatism of Campeche's diocese and local government and, above all, the camps' remoteness from ancestral Mayan fields and villages are filtering back to the camps in Chiapas, and opposition to relocation is certain to grow. The Indians' impassioned pleas to President Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado, many of which have been published in the Mexican press, have so far gone unheeded, despite de la Madrid's insistence last April that their personal rights be protected and their appeals for asylum be considered. Ignoring these voices, many of which propose reasonable alternatives to forced removal, will only complicate the crisis.

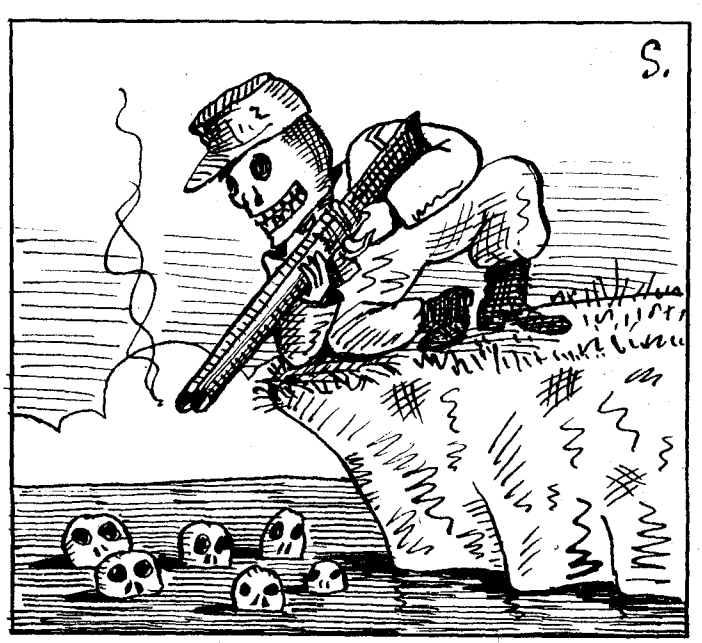
"Let them put a bullet through my head here," said a resident of Puerto Rico camp. "It is preferable to being tortured and decapitated in Guatemala." The majority of refugees I spoke with shared the sentiment of this proud communal chieftain from a mountain region of Huehuetenango. When I last saw him, he vowed he would join the 3,500 refugees who had crossed the Lacantún River and were now determined to give their remaining food to their children and elderly and face starvation in the jungle.

Another camp resident said, "Here in Mexico, if we are killed, we can at least have the dignity of burial by our relatives, so they will know where we are. In Guatemala, too many of us disappear without a trace."

Meanwhile, the Mexican government adamantly denies allegations in the international press that the forced relocation of Guatemalan refugees and the hardening of its position on Nicaragua's repayment of its oil debt signify a caving in to pressures from U.S. and Guatemalan leaders. Last month Mexico permitted several U.S. journalists and human rights observers from Americas Watch to visit the camps. It has also temporarily halted the relocation of refugees until the facilities in Campeche have been improved.

But disquieting signs persist. Recently, the government cracked down on Guatemalan leftist militants in Mexico City, a number of whom have been arrested or have disappeared. Increased restrictions were placed on the migrant workers who continue to pour into the Tapachula area of southern Chiapas by the thousands and who normally receive ninety-day permits to work on the coastal plantations. The Mexican press fell ominously silent on the refugee question following the July 16 arrest and interrogation of journalist Adolfo Aguilar Zinser, who had written several editorials critical of government policy in *Uno Mas Uno*, a respected leftist daily in Mexico City.

A test of Mexico's long-term intentions toward the refugees will be the way it deals with the estimated 100,000 Guatemalans who are living under varying degrees of hardship outside the tightly controlled refugee camps. An equally important test will be whether it continues to permit human rights groups to monitor conditions in the camps. □



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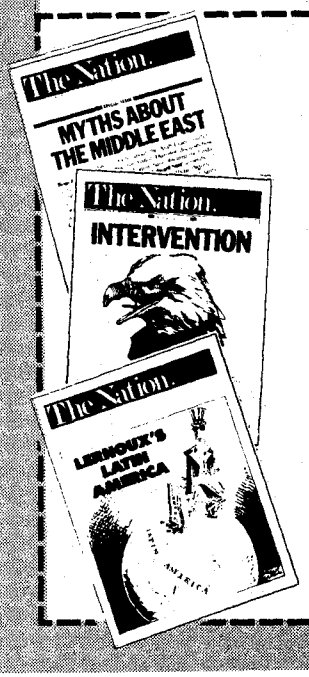

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

A Rebel's Cause

LAWRENCE GOODWYN

FANNY WRIGHT: Rebel in America. *By Celia Morris Eckhardt. Harvard University Press. 337 pp. $22.50.*

Out of the cycles of historical experience, some future generation, if we have enough of them, will doubtless look back on our time as one of extreme provincialism, a period of timid imaginations imprisoned within the tight cultural boundaries of mature industrialization. Our descendants will wonder at how easily we convinced ourselves, Tory and radical, Communist and capitalist, that we were "progressive," even as we reproduced in our daily social relations the habits of authority and deference that our own sectarian histories assured us we were outgrowing. One may speculate that the sense of possibility possessed by such a future generation will take its inspiration from that moment in the past when ancient orthodoxies were first loosened and the new technocratic ones were not yet fixed in place—that time after Rousseau but before Marx, after Newton but before Darwin, after Adam Smith but before Freud and, perhaps most important, after Winstanley but before Lenin.

Celia Morris Eckhardt's brilliant and passionate biography stirs such speculations, for her subject, the radical freethinker Frances Wright, lived out her adult life during that span of two generations at the beginning of the nineteenth century when the industrial engine was first beginning to crank up in England, when the mass regimentation that was to come could be detected but was not yet an awesome social reality—a time, in short, when the potential power of science to transform life and the potential power of political ideas to transform the inherited culture had seized the imagination of those who could reason.

Frances Wright lived an extraordinary life, politically and emotionally, and it is one of the merits of this sensitive and unblinking biography that she is revealed to us in all her Olympian contradiction. Hers was, quite simply, a life suffused with grandeur and irony, epochal dreams and lean tragedies. Although she moved easily among persons of power and prestige on both sides of the Atlantic, she responded to her own visions, and her extravagant public life was punctuated by long periods of anguished solitude.

Although Wright labored on behalf of her beliefs in England, France and the United States, she considered the latter the best hope for the fulfillment of the democratic idea; but she also felt the promise of America to be fundamentally threatened by organized religion, by slavery and by undemocratic tendencies associated with the spread of the factory system. Most of all, since her conception of equality was comprehensive, she felt everything about the relationship between men and women needed to be rethought and the institution of marriage subjected to new criteria. If she did not bear the burden of every slave, every farmer victimized by enclosure, every worker harnessed to the emerging rhythms of the mill town and, above all, every woman caught in the layers of inherited patriarchy, her life of egalitarian advocacy nevertheless reveals at least as much about the rigidities of Western culture as it does about her own shortcomings.

In 1821, at the age of 25, Wright was instrumental in founding an interracial communitarian experiment—and she founded it in the American South. She was intimately involved in the early struggle for a workingmen's party in New York City. She smuggled conspiratorial anti-Royalist correspondence and agitational propaganda across European borders and stood with Lafayette—amid considerable apprehensions as to the correctness of his tactical decisions—in the revolutionary crisis in France in 1830.

Meanwhile, she wrote. Her plays, brimming with democratic assertion, were condemned in England and much praised in America. Later, her politics were lauded in Haiti and condemned in New York. Through it all, her breathtakingly candid radicalism, coupled with a commanding physical presence (she was almost six feet tall) and a persuasive oratorical style, insured her an immense notoriety. She was labeled "a bold blasphemer and a voluptuous preacher of licentiousness . . . impervious to the voice of virtue and case-hardened against shame." She was said to threaten "all that is venerable and sacred in religion, all that is safe and wise in law, all that is pure and lovely in domestic virtue." She was, no less, "the Red Harlot of Infidelity."

Beyond such calumny, bitter personal ironies assaulted her. It was the fate of this unashamed opponent of conventional marriage to fall in love with a man (a radical who shared most of her ideas if not always her willingness to act on them) whose ultimate loyalty was to his wife and three children. Years later, she decided, after getting pregnant, to marry a man she did not love to avoid afflicting her child with the unjustified stigma of illegitimacy. The result was not a happy one. As with social and religious conventions, so with legal systems: A vocal critic of patriarchal judicial codes, she was humiliated, through the legal system, by her husband over their respective rights to income from her property. At a visceral level, she lived a life of intense cultural struggle.

Later there were Americans, a small minority in their time as Fanny Wright was in hers, who understood her importance to the democratic heritage. Her example, and her writings, touched some deep chord in women who have come to be far better known as feminist pioneers. Elizabeth Cady Stanton kept Wright's works, along with Thomas Paine's, on her library table; Susan B. Anthony kept her portrait in a place of prominence in her study. After labor militance in antebellum America came to be stigmatized as "Fanny Wrightism," working-class radicals duly appeared as its defenders.

All of which can scarcely come as earthshaking news to those familiar with the politics of cultural struggle and its attendant propaganda of sanctioning and desanctioning. Fanny Wright's ideas were deeply threatening to the conventional order of things; she was adequately desanctioned so that only those willing to sacrifice their prestige in the social order would associate with her. There is nothing exceptional in those dynamics; they are the predict-

Lawrence Goodwyn teaches history at Duke University. He is the author of Democratic Promise: The Populist Moment in America *(Oxford University Press) and is completing a book on the rise of Solidarity in Poland.*

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able byproducts of the social mechanisms through which cultures preserve themselves.

Indeed, it is not altogether surprising to learn that Wright unwittingly abetted her critics. One of the great strengths of Eckhardt's interpretation is her ability to show Wright's misjudgments as the understandable results of subtle interactions of personality, convention, ambition and ideology, rather than as anomalies which invite special criticism or special allowances. We learn that Wright "did not develop the psychic protection of a sense of humor," a circumstance which eventually exacted fearful costs. And while the enclosure movement in her native Devonshire, heightened by the Highland clearances that took place around her in her adolescence, gave her "a suspicion of progress" that lasted forever, this well-born young Englishwoman was not kept from discovering "how little there was to be learned in drawing rooms."

After describing the great success of Wright's first play's opening night, Eckhardt pauses for a moment and lets the reader meditate on the anguish of a 23-year-old artist forced by convention and circumstances to sit silently amid cries of "author, author" from an audience unaware that the play was not written by a man. Flattering reviewers acted on the same assumption and maintained her obscurity.

As an advocate determined to push the radical Whig tradition to its logical extension, Wright learned that a proper balance between receptiveness and intransigence, between modesty and aggression, was both psychologically necessary and hard to sustain. To carry her ideas out of the theater and into society—to become a public person—Wright "had to use so much psychic energy that she was in danger of having too little left for the intellectual discriminations on which the value of her works depended. She had to steel herself so vigorously to withstand the disapproval she invited that she risked becoming hard."

She became a romantic with streaks of steel. As she matured and became notorious, she "continued to think of moral experience as of an experiment in chemistry or a problem in long division . . . and at some primal level she remained impervious to experience." Surely the stuff of revolutionary exhortation and, just as surely, the ingredients of personal tragedy.

One thinks of Edmund Wilson's vivid chronicle of the high dreams and ruined lives of the radicals who peopled *To the Finland Station.* The last act of that drama is drenched in the blood of the twentieth century, but Frances Wright came along very early and had to test her deepest social visions in surroundings bereft of models.

Today we are so learned and bruised that to walk with this Englishwoman through the Peterloo massacre, through her interracial experiment at Nashoba, Tennessee, to rehearse yet one more time the sectarian divisions in New York's working class of 1829, to tread such now familiar terrain is to bring along more modern fears and apprehensions than Fanny Wright herself felt.

And that, in the end, is the striking revelation afforded by this splendid book. It is not the isolation and the calumny, the "Red Harlot of Infidelity," that sticks in the mind; it is rather the discovery of the extent to which Frances Wright was part of an immense stream of early nineteenth-century democratic striving.

Thomas Jefferson responded warmly to her plays and James Madison gave her cautionary advice she did not take. Jeremy Bentham and Mary Shelley in England and Lafayette in France were dazzled by her intellectual drive, her verbal skill and her moral courage. Since they also detected some variety of innocence in her, they did not find her easy to describe, as witnesssed by the tension in the language used to praise her. To Bentham she had "the sweetest and strongest mind that ever was lodged in a female body." Walt Whitman said "We all loved her; fell down before her; her very appearance seemed to enthrall us. She was sweeter, nobler, grander—multiplied by twenty—than all who traduced her." Through long years of close association, Lafayette courted her to the point of scandal. Robert Owen's son was so permanently entranced he did everything necessary to be by her side—he sat on the governing board at Nashoba and became co-editor of the *Free Enquirer* in New York. John Stuart Mill regarded her as one of the most important women of the day.

All, of course, were people of relatively "high" consciousness. But what are we to make of Fanny Wright convincing Frances Trollope—Frances Trollope!—to come to the frontier commune at Nashoba? And what are we to make of huge lecture halls across America packed with men and women who came to hear and applaud Frances Wright's advanced ideas about social equality? These were, it needs to be remembered, almost entirely white audiences which had "learned" about Nashoba from vituperous attacks on the "interracial brothel" in the "respectable" press. In her "Explanatory Notes on Nashoba," written to counter hysterical publicity about black and white men and women "living together," Wright typically got so enmeshed in the logic of the experiment—preparing slaves for productive free lives—that she advanced to new ground. If, in the course of cooperative living, people developed strong personal ties, that was only natural since sexual passion "was the strongest and noblest of human passions" and "the source of the best joys of our existence." In the era of the Second Great Awakening in the West, Wright dug in her heels and lectured against the stultifying constraints and absurd hierarchies of organized religion.

It is a strange story. In our age it is very nearly unbelievable. It is with a bit of relief, perhaps, that we learn that Frances Trollope was appalled by the rustic conditions at Nashoba and appalled even more by the ease with which Wright moved among the artisans and ex-slaves who lived there. The food was not proper at all and Fanny Wright did not seem to notice.

Eckhardt's summary of those striking juxtapositions has a certain sweep:

The story of Fanny Wright is hard and

PERIPHERAL VISION

Silence
is most like itself.

In a foreign land
it requires no translation.

No clarifying gesture
can improve on it.

There is no way to restore it
in its clamorous absence.

Once flesh has been relieved
of all integrity

and the skull incurs its crop
of green gnawing hair

only the rare breeze over paddies
combs and patiently recombs,

there is little to be said. Except
among the living

the dead
most resemble the dead.

William Pitt Root

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disquieting. It tells more about the losses than the gains of America in the nineteenth century. It tells how much people love the rhetoric of equality and how little they are inclined to make equality possible. It tells how self-righteously men fight to hold their power over half the human race. It tells how women crucify the would-be saviors of their sex and how men mock them with that fact. It tells how fragile reason is, and how deadly isolation. It tells of a woman whose strength was tightly bound to her frailty. It is a story of courage, boldness, and waste. Most of all it is a story not merely of the past: to learn it is to recover a part of our democratic heritage, and to discover that the time for Fanny Wright has not yet come.

Fanny Wright: Rebel in America is the kind of book that seems fated to develop an underground reputation among the cognoscenti and, thence, a broader readership. Fine. □

Song of the City

MICHAEL KAZIN

CHANTS DEMOCRATIC: New York City & the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850. *By Sean Wilentz. Oxford University Press. 446 pp. $34.95.*

"The time has arrived when the people of the United States must decide whether they will be a Republic in fact, or only a Republic in name," labor reformer and journeyman printer George Henry Evans editorialized in his self-published New York City newspaper in 1834. Evans and his fellow artisan/activists were not awed by the wealth and power accumulated by aristocratic employers such as John Jacob Astor, whose very name, wrote Herman Melville, "rings like unto bullion." Instead, they condemned the elite for being, in effect, anti-American, for sabotaging the egalitarian creed of the Revolution. By means of unions, political parties, mass marches and a mountain of pamphlets and tabloids, Evans and his many counterparts sounded an alarm that mobilized thousands of New Yorkers to fight for an American democracy worthy of the name.

Chants Democratic tells the grand and finely textured story of how early industrial capitalism changed the lives of most New Yorkers and spurred the wage earners among them to demand a return to the first principles of republicanism. What Sean Wilentz has produced is nothing less than a scholarly epic. Among the flood of labor histories influenced by E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963), it has no equal in breadth of subject, grace of style or acuity of interpretation. Wilentz grounds his narrative in the raw details of lower-Manhattan life before the Civil War (the city's settled area extended only as far as 30th Street). But he illuminates the conflicts of class and ideology that touched all Americans during the long period between the Presidencies of Washington and Lincoln.

Wilentz begins with a meticulous portrayal of the changes an expanding market brought to the workplace. He shows that industrialization did not erode the dignity of every craft. Garment cutters at Brooks Brothers switched from the custom trade to "ready-mades" but continued to draw large salaries and to hire their own assistants. Up to the time of the Civil War, butchers purveyed their goods at outdoor stalls where "with their bloody smocks, top hats, and bejeweled stickpins, renowned for their physical prowess, adept at the use of knives and cleavers, they looked—and smelled—like members of a masculine confraternity."

But at the same time, about half of New York wage earners, many of them women and children, toiled in Dickensian garrets under the infamous "outwork system" in which fluctuating piece rates and delayed payments were as routine as a diet of potatoes. "A tailor is worth nothing without a wife and very often a child," ran a maxim of the 1840s.

Wilentz describes this world of proud artisans, sweaty laborers and their employers with a sympathy and precision that mainstream economic historians are seldom able to muster. Of the garment industry, in which ruthless competition was the rule, he writes, "Hounded by their creditors, haunted by the specter of late payment and bankrupt-

Michael Kazin teaches U.S. history at Stanford University. He is writing a book on San Francisco labor and politics in the early twentieth century.

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cy, the contractors and garret masters lived an existence in which concern for one's workers was a liability and in which callousness . . . became a way of life." Wilentz's indignant eloquence reminds one of those sections of *Capital* where Marx analyzed—with unremitting scorn—the struggle over the length of the workday in British factories. On both sides of the Atlantic, businesses churned out cheaper and often better-quality goods for all classes of consumers. But the price was high: an urban society sharply divided between managers and managed, those who smiled at "progress" and those who often cursed its effects.

The political and cultural sides of this momentous conflict occupy the bulk of *Chants Democratic*. Wilentz's story has a huge cast of characters: radical pamphleteers and union leaders jostle with temperance crusaders, sly operators from Tammany Hall and the politically influential volunteer firemen. A near-bewildering array of organizations—from workingmen's parties to German gymnastic clubs—intervene in the fray and then depart. Famous figures such as Fanny Wright, Samuel Morse and Martin Van Buren appear briefly, but the little-known spokesmen for working-class grievances are the ones who steal the show.

One of the more intriguing of these is an Irish-born politician named Michael Walsh. Walsh, a gifted journalist and an electric speaker, carved out a power base in New York's Democratic Party with the help of a loyal clique composed mainly of young boxers and craftsmen from the Bowery—a neighborhood then alive with taverns and theaters catering to a working-class clientele. With a dramatic bluster fed by alcoholism, Walsh seems to fit the familiar image of the opportunistic Irish politician. However, according to Wilentz he rose to a seat in Congress by speaking out for such radical doctrines as the labor theory of value. "Demagogues tell you that you are freemen," Walsh wrote in 1845. "They lie. . . . No man devoid of all other means of support but that which his labor affords him can be a freeman, under the present state of society."

Wilentz's narrative powers are formidable, yet his resolute defense of the values of white working-class New Yorkers sometimes inhibits an accurate understanding of antebellum America. For example, Walsh, who glibly equated "wage slavery" with the bondage of blacks, spent his one term in the House of Representatives in the early 1850s as an apologist for Southern planters. Wilentz passes quickly over this rightward lurch, blaming it on the requirements of party loyalty, and then remarks that in any case Bowery voters did not follow the debates about the extension of slavery into Kansas or Nebraska. The virulent racism that Walsh shared with his constituents is barely mentioned.

During the nineteenth century and much of the twentieth, "class consciousness" often served an inglorious cause. It reflected the ethnic majority's view that nonwhites were a threat to their liberties and livelihood as much as it inspired the unity of all wage earners. For four days in July 1863, thousands of predominantly Irish workers protested Lincoln's draft for the war against slavery with a bloody rampage through the streets of Manhattan. They began by storming an armory, but the major target was the city's small black population. "Any black man, woman, or child who chanced within the reach of the rioters was put to death, often through hideous tortures," wrote historian David Montgomery. Many of the rioters were unemployed, and their anger at a conscription law that a wealthy man could easily escape was certainly justified. But republican idealism seems an inadequate explanation for what they did.

Wilentz ensnares himself in a dilemma shared by many contemporary American labor historians. He gets caught between a desire to emphasize what should have been—namely a working-class movement for socialism—and providing a shrewd analysis of what was. *Chants Democratic* is an impressive work, and deserves to be offered at a price lower than one suited to a coffee-table book. However, the tradition it celebrates was more ambiguous than his romantic conception allows. □

Two Early Organizers

MAURICE ISSERMAN

LILLIAN WALD OF HENRY STREET. *By Beatrice Siegel. Macmillan. 192 pp. $12.95.*

REBUILDING THE PULP AND PAPER WORKERS' UNION, 1933-1941. *By Robert H. Zieger. University of Tennessee Press. 256 pp. $19.95.*

At the close of the nineteenth century, a remarkable generation of young women reformers moved into poor neighborhoods in American cities and devoted themselves to alleviating the harsh conditions under which new immigrants worked and lived. For the most part, those women were from well-established Yankee families. They had grown up with all the advantages their society could offer, including higher education. But they would not be satisfied with the careers considered appropriate to their sex. While they did not openly challenge prevailing concepts of "women's sphere," they considerably broadened the area that that sphere encompassed. If women were meant to be mothers, teachers, nurses and moral exemplars, they decided, fine; let them nurture, instruct, heal and inspire all of society, not just their own families.

Beatrice Siegel's *Lillian Wald of Henry Street* is a valuable addition to the growing collection of biographies devoted to that generation. Wald's background differed in minor respects from that of Jane Addams: she was from a German-Jewish rather than a Yankee family, and went to nursing school rather than to college. But her motives were much the same. "I feel the need," she wrote in her application to nursing school, "of serious, definite work . . . I choose this profession because I feel a natural aptitude for it and because it has for years appeared to me womanly, congenial work." Wald's conception of nursing went well beyond dispensing pills and changing bandages. She founded the Henry Street settlement in New York City, allied herself with striking garment workers and campaigned against America's entry into World War I. Siegel's account is clearly and simply written and is presented in an attractive format especially suitable for younger readers.

Maurice Isserman teaches history at Smith College. His book Which Side Were You On? The American Communist Party During the Second World War *(Wesleyan University Press) will be reissued in paperback this fall.*

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At first glance, Robert Zieger's history of the International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers seems to be a paean to the virtues of old-fashioned labor leaders and old-fashioned labor history, but his story of this conservative American Federation of Labor union and its cautious leader, John P. Burke, is complex, shrewd and subtle. By the end of the book, Zieger leaves the reader with a new though not uncritical appreciation of Burke's brand of unionism. In the process he also forces us to set aside our fashionable prejudices against this kind of institutional history.

The unions that remained loyal to the A.F.L. during the 1930s have generally been ignored by labor historians, or else used as examples of stodgy business unionism in contrast with the achievements of the early Congress of Industrial Organizations. The story about how John L. Lewis of the United Mineworkers slugged Big Bill Hutcheson of the Carpenters Union at the 1935 A.F.L. convention has been told and retold so often that it ought to be a folk song. Lewis, the champion of industrial unionism, is always the hero; Hutcheson, the symbol of bureaucracy, always the goat. No one should waste sympathy on Hutcheson, who got what he deserved. But in the heretofore obscure John P. Burke, Zieger has uncovered a more worthy exemplar of the A.F.L.'s cautious pragmatism.

Burke became president of the pulp and paper workers' union in 1917 and remained in office until 1964. He was an honest, selfless and reflective man, given to speculating about how well future labor historians would understand his difficult position. He had been a member of the Socialist Party before World War I, and throughout his life remained a fervent admirer of Eugene V. Debs. He nursed his union through the difficult "lean years" of the 1920s and took advantage of the opportunities provided by the New Deal to increase its membership from a few thousand in the early 1930s to 60,000 by the start of World War II. He was neither a romantic nor a visionary leader, but he built a sizable union under difficult circumstances and was able to protect its gains. At a time when the labor movement's survival is again in jeopardy, his is an achievement worthy of respect.

After painting this favorable portrait of Burke, however, Zieger reminds us that the pulp and paper workers' gains would not have been possible were it not for the more radical and flamboyant tactics that the C.I.O. was employing at the same time. When C.I.O. organizers led sit-down strikes in rubber and automobile factories, their actions inspired other workers, including those who had flocked to the A.F.L. unions at the end of the 1930s. Employers in the Pacific Northwest and the South sometimes encouraged pulp and paper workers' union organizers in order to prevent the C.I.O. from organizing their workers. This was more than a case of simple union rivalry: in the South, the C.I.O. attempted to organize black and white workers on an equal basis, while Burke tolerated discrimination against blacks.

Rebuilding the Pulp and Paper Workers' Union provides a necessary corrective to romanticized visions of the 1930s as a time of unlimited potential for union organizing. Conservative labor leaders like Burke had been to a hard school in the 1920s and understood the constraints and dangers they continued to face in the 1930s. One can appreciate Burke's virtues and still conclude that if there had been only Burkes around in the 1930s, and no reckless or radical C.I.O. firebrands creating trouble across the industrial landscape, the pulp and paper workers' union and the American labor movement as a whole would never have been rebuilt. □

BOOK NOTES.

JOSH FREEMAN

FORCES OF PRODUCTION: A Social History of Industrial Automation. *By David F. Noble. Alfred A. Knopf. 432 pp. $22.95.* Social historians often rail at technological determinism, the idea that industrial methods and machinery evolve according to their own internal logic, but few are equipped or have taken the time to show how social factors figured in the development of a particular technology. David F. Noble has met the challenge in a detailed, often brilliant study of the design and use of automated machine tools after World War II.

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Josh Freeman is on the staff of the American Working-Class History Project.

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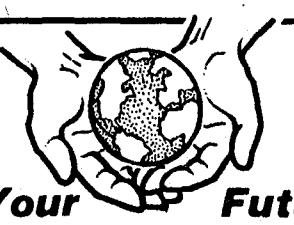

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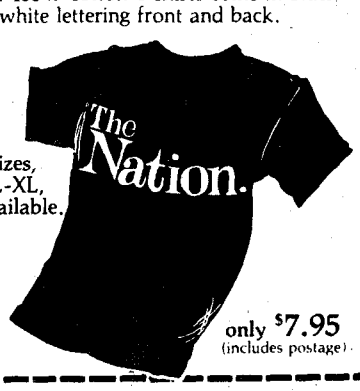

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which uses prepunched paper tapes to run machines, triumphed over other equally viable procedures. N/C was complex, expensive and prone to breakdown, but it could be integrated with nascent computer-run systems and it shifted the planning and control of machining from the shop floor to management's offices. For manufacturers, it meant lessening their dependence on skilled craftsmen, thereby undercutting unionism; for engineers, fresh from the heady experience of wartime weapons development, it meant an opportunity to enlarge their domain; and for the Air Force, which picked up the bill, it meant a tightly controlled means of manufacturing specialized parts for military aircraft. Intentions, though, are one thing, results another; as Noble carefully demonstrates, N/C has been anything but a smooth road to greater productivity. Noble's conclusion—that economic considerations are outweighed in machine design by social and cultural predispositions—needs further proof, but his book is a tour de force of scholarly investigation.

THE HAYMARKET TRAGEDY. *By Paul Avrich. Princeton University Press. 535 pp. $29.50.* The 1886 Haymarket "riot" holds a special place in the American radical imagination. A bomb thrown at police breaking up a Chicago labor demonstration killed one policeman; the police gunfire that followed killed a dozen more people. The bomb thrower was never identified, but eight anarchists were convicted of murder. One committed suicide, four were hung and the rest were later pardoned by a governor who characterized their trial as a mockery of justice. Paul Avrich fills in the details in his exhaustive study of the case.

An expert on anarchism, Avrich is sympathetic to the defendants but not to their advocacy of violence. His strength is in chronicling the rise and inner working of the anarchist movement; he is weaker on its historical context and on the Chicago establishment that was determined to see vengeance done. Avrich uncovers no big surprises, but he does shed light on some previously obscure aspects of the incident. He also speculates about who threw the bomb (he thinks it was an anarchist). By the way, shortly before the executions, a *Nation* editorial called the convicted men "chicken-hearted" and said that "the gallows is the punishment the case calls for."

UNION POWER AND AMERICAN DEMOCRACY: The UAW and the Democratic Party, 1935-72. *By Dudley W. Buffa. University of Michigan Press. 268 pp. $27.* The title of Dudley W. Buffa's book is deceptive: it is not a general study of the role of the United Automobile Workers Union in the Democratic coalition but rather a narrow look at how the U.A.W. became, after World War II, the most powerful bureaucratic force within the Michigan Democratic Party. Buffa, a one-time Democratic staffer, is extremely knowledgeable about inner-party maneuvering. Unfortunately, he never explains the significance of the events he describes, nor does he have much to say about the internal life of the U.A.W. Too bad, because buried here is the remarkable story of a group of once-militant U.A.W. leaders who by 1972 had become middle-of-the-road Democratic power brokers, while the white members of their union voted in massive numbers for George Wallace and the black members became increasingly alienated from mainstream politics.

WIGAN PIER REVISITED: Poverty and Politics in the 80s. *By Beatrix Campbell. Virago Press. 234 pp. £4.50.* In 1982 Beatrix Campbell, a London-based journalist, visited the northern English industrial region that George Orwell had described nearly fifty years earlier in *The Road To Wigan Pier.* Like Orwell, she found massive unemployment, decay and despair. Campbell shares Orwell's gift for detailing "the material and emotional economy of poverty." Unlike Orwell, though, she is as interested in working-class women as she is in working-class men, viewing both from a feminist perspective. The result is a rich, if depressing, look at contemporary England and a radical critique of the labor movement and the left. Campbell stresses the many divisions within the working class and the tendency of unions and the Labor party to ignore them, often at the expense of women. Ultimately, her book is also an attack on Orwell, particularly on his tendency to sentimentalize the "decency" of working-class culture, downplaying its deep conservatism, inequity and parochialism. The book is available from Virago Press, 41 William IV Street, London WC2N 4DB; perhaps it will find an American publisher and stimulate some equally fresh and sober reappraisals of American poverty and politics. ☐

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Multimedia Techno-Waif

FRANK ROSE

For a performance artist, Laurie Anderson certainly has been generating a lot of objects lately—records, a book, even a major retrospective that fills up most of the Queens Museum in New York with photos, videos and weird things. Presumably, this is what they mean by "multimedia." Yet most of it has the look of documentation rather than art, for her art really comes in the form of words—spoken words, set to music and put in visual context. "Language is a virus from outer space," she says, quoting William Burroughs, in her sweeping performance piece, *United States*. If so, then she must be a mad doctor, a midnight gene-splicer whose cryptic communiqués from the lab could lead to some unforeseen form of human mutation.

This is all very well timed for the Information Age, and indeed one key to Anderson's success seems to be the playful way she uses, and comments on, electronic technology. By getting on stage and single-handedly manipulating a lot of complicated electronic gadgetry, she puts herself in command of a technology few of us understand and many are frightened of. Yet her naïve persona—basically she comes across as a highly evolved techno-waif—makes her an immediately sympathetic figure. It's as if some spiky-haired E.T. had unexpectedly offered to stumble ahead into the future while the rest of us tentatively followed.

The unknown is powerful stuff, of course, but what's really surprising is how few artists are venturing into the same territory. Computerized music is a lot more compelling than computerized art; that certainly has something to do with it. In general, however, the contemporary art world seems to be backpedaling as fast as it can. If it hopes to gain cachet, any budding movement that doesn't use spray paint had better have a "neo" tacked to the front of its name. Laurie Anderson is an anomaly in this environment. Despite her popularity, she's a throwback to the late 1960s and early 1970s, when the art object was dematerializing and it wasn't outrageous for artists and scientists to look ahead together.

As performance art, Anderson's work approaches pure information: ethereal, nonlinear, a succession of discrete bits, abstract yet full of content. What she has to say revolves around the love/hate relationship Americans have with nature and technology. In "Sharkey's Day," the lead song from *Mister Heartbreak*, her second Warner Brothers album, she tells the story of a grocery store employee, a middle-aged, Middle American, middle-everything sort of guy who can probably look forward to being the store manager if he stays at his desk another twenty years. Sharkey has strange dreams he can't quite remember. He views insects and animals with horror: "I'd rather see this on TV. Tones it down." He takes note of the new mechanical trees that grow to their full height, then chop themselves down. He views life as something that comes out of a boggy swamp and creeps into the house. Animals howl and yelp in the background. Does anybody still wonder why everything in the supermarket is shrink-wrapped or frozen?

Sharkey's saga is set against an aural collage of screeching guitars, droning synthesizers and primitive African percussive instruments. The mix is a strange one; Anderson is almost as anomalous in the music scene as she is in the art world. It's not that there's any shortage of self-consciously avant-garde synthesizer bands; just that most of them are more interested in rhythms than in ideas. But even as a musician, Anderson's primary medium is language. If she resembles anybody in rock, it's Talking Heads—not coincidentally, a New York City group formed by art school graduates.

After graduating from Barnard as an art history major in 1969, Anderson fell in with the conceptual art crowd. Some of the early work on view at the Queens Museum until September 9 is surprisingly political—for example, "The Street Wall Journal," a 1969 newsprint poster that screams "Hanoi—Haiphong—Fight Back." But she moved quickly from agitprop art to whimsically inventive performance pieces: most notably, her 1974 "Duets on Ice," in which she played a duet with herself on the violin (one half was prerecorded) while wearing ice skates frozen in blocks of ice. When the ice melted, the piece was over. She did sculpture, too: for example, "Handphone Table," which allows you to hear music when you put your elbows in its sockets and your head in your hands. But the humor of her work didn't fit in well with the dry academicism that characterized 1970s art. The SoHo crowd thought her frivolous; she thought them elitist and dull.

This put her on a wavelength with the new generation just coming out of art school, a generation which regarded SoHo as synonymous with enervation. They turned instead to the Lower East Side punk rock scene, which had raw energy and a jolting immediacy. With few exceptions—Talking Heads chief among them—the bands they formed were not the type you'd read about in *Rolling Stone*. Most of them turned out to be less interested in playing rock than in pursuing art by other means. The results were, to most people, as unlistenable as the cool esthetics of minimalism had been unfathomable.

Anderson's response to all this was summed up in "Difficult Listening Hour" from *United States*: "So sit bolt upright in that straight-backed chair,/ button that top button,/and get set for some difficult music." But to anyone who was remotely inclined to appreciate it, Anderson's music wasn't difficult at all. She blended music and performance art in a way that was accessible, intelligent, even fun. People liked it. She got famous. So famous that, practically speaking, she stopped being a performance artist and became a performer.

It's been three years now since she signed a multirecord contract with Warner Brothers, a step that freed her from the constraints of the art world but brought with it a whole new set of pressures. Warner may not be expecting her to make back the money it lost on Atari, but mass distribution does have its price. There has been uncertainty about the release of *United States*, a six-record set which should be out in November; meanwhile, MTV reportedly refused to air her "Sharkey's Day" video unless she added a clip explaining what it all means. Being on the pop charts makes her an easy target for those who are allergic to art.

The reaction to her work is a distinctly binary phenomenon: people either love it or they hate it. The problem is

Frank Rose is the author of Into the Heart of the Mind: An American Quest for Artificial Intelligence *(Harper & Row).*

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not that she's all that difficult to comprehend; it's more that she forces you to experience things in new ways—to hear music through your elbows, for example. She's also a master of the clever non sequitur, the disjointed association, the sly pun. In *United States* the book (Harper & Row, $19.95)—a lavishly produced, 231-page word-and-picture record of the work that received its premiere last year at the Brooklyn Academy of Music—there are hundreds of these games, some silly, some profound, some simply dizzying. In "Closed Circuits" she declares:

> There's luck, and there's the law. . . .
> And it's a tricky balancing act be-
> tween the two because
> both are equally true.
> 'Cause might makes right
> and anything could happen. . . .

That is the kind of thing that a lot of people regard as merely strange. To those who don't, however, Anderson is not a pop star or a cult figure, she's a cultural landmark. As an artist whose primary theme is dislocation—being lost, moving fast, unfamiliar territory—she speaks directly to the concerns of the moment. That's the funny thing about dislocation: when everybody is experiencing it, it can put you right at the center of things. □

THEATER.

PAUL BERMAN

The Golem
Kuni Leml

Everyone knows who the golem was—the Jewish Frankenstein created by the mystic rabbi of Prague to fend off Christian blood libels. But who was H. Leivick, author of *The Golem*, which played this summer at the New York Shakespeare Festival in Central Park? I asked my Yiddish translator and dear friend, Ahrne Thorne, and he supplied some memories. He recalled sitting with Leivick many times on the Bronx subway, thirty or forty years ago, as they rode into the city. Leivick used to hunch over a newspaper or book. He was thin and pale, white-skinned, with brilliant silver hair, and to someone observing him across the car, there was a definite aura around his head. It may have been a poet's aura that came from inside, or it may have been something projected on him by his ardent readers. Or the aura may have come from his Jesus-like sensibility. Leivick as poet cultivated a longing for suffering and pain, a longing sometimes for Jesus himself, of a sort that is unseemly in a Jew; and evidently something of this clung to him physically. Unfortunately, Leivick the famous writer and literary critic for the Jewish *Day* knew Thorne merely as a typesetter on that rival paper, the *Jewish Daily Forward*, and rarely showed interest in striking up a conversation. The two men didn't commune, they commuted.

What Thorne remembered about Leivick came mainly from his neighbor and political comrade of many years, Moyshke Schulmeister. Schulmeister was a poor man, an ordinary laborer in a cloak factory, where he swept the floor. He lived as a boarder in someone's apartment in the Amalgamated Houses in the Bronx. And he told the following story. Leivick was dying in Montefiore Hospital, and Schulmeister went to visit. He found the room, but Leivick's wife stopped him at the door. The great writer was paralyzed; he couldn't speak; he shouldn't be disturbed. Leivick saw who was there, however, and feebly waved his hand to beckon Schulmeister in. Of course there was no possibility of talking, but Schulmeister stood by the bed and looked into Leivick's eyes. The old men squeezed hands. And as they did this, Schulmeister thought back on the past.

He remembered a prison cell in Minsk. It was 1907 and he was still a teen-ager. He had been arrested for participating in an underground revolutionary print shop. There were twenty prisoners in the cell, mostly teen-agers, and they were all revolutionaries. The first couple of days everyone was silent and remained wrapped in himself, but gradually boredom set in, and the prisoners began to talk, to play chess, to entertain one another. Someone performed magic tricks. A 19-year-old revolutionary named Leivick Halpern, in for his second political offense against the Czar, stood out among the group. He paced the cell at night, scribbling sporadically on a sheet of paper. Other prisoners wrote letters; Leivick Halpern wrote poems. He took an interest in Schulmeister and laughed at Schulmeister's nom de revolution, which was Pullzhiddek, Polish for "Half a Little Jew." Finally he offered to compose a play for Half a Little Jew and himself to perform.

They performed it. Leivick was the melamed, the Hebrew teacher who stands over the little pupils with a stick and points to passages to read. Half a Little Jew was the pupil, and was obliged to ask silly questions about each new passage. What were the passages? Erotic quotations from the Bible. It was a ribald play. The prisoners burst into laughter.

Schulmeister and Leivick Halpern were in the cell for almost a year, which gave their play a long run. Even the non-Jews liked it. The Jews translated the lines, and things got to the point where the non-Jews would laugh even before they learned what was said. The play was, in all likelihood, Leivick's first theatrical success.

After five years in Siberia, Leivick escaped to America. Later Schulmeister escaped too, but instead of fleeing to New York, he went to Moscow under false papers. He corresponded with Leivick in New York. He wanted his family to know he was still alive, but didn't want the police to know exactly where. So he had Leivick write the Russian Schulmeisters from New York to say that Moyshke had got away to America. In fact, he was active in the Russian revolutionary underground. He belonged to the Anarkhiia group. The 1917 revolution broke out, and the Anarkhiia group played an active role in the name of libertarian socialism. Later the Bolsheviks consolidated power, and the Anarkhiia comrades objected. The most militant of them began staging "expropriations" of Bolshevik banks. Schulmeister took part. A Latvian engineer in the group plotted a perfect action; Schulmeister and the others held up the Moscow bank without a drop of blood. The money went to the anarchist party.

Of course, afterward, Schulmeister was in worse trouble with the Bolsheviks than he'd ever been under the Czar. He fled to America—for real this time. Naturally he looked up Leivick, but the rough equality that existed in the Minsk prison could hardly continue in New York. Leivick worked as a paperhanger in New York. Irving Howe reports that as late as 1934, Leivick could be seen carrying his bucket and roll of wallpaper through the city streets. But even in his paperhanging years, he was a celebrated figure, now under the name H. Leivick. He wrote *The Golem* in 1921, and it was translated into many languages. He belonged to the Yiddish literary elite. Schulmeister, by contrast,

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lacked even a trade. There was also a political difference between the men. Schulmeister was a bitter and disappointed anticommunist, but Leivick spent many years working for communist causes (until he, too, lapsed into bitter disillusionment over Jewish issues). *The New York Times* reported almost fifty years ago that East Side audiences used to break out into "The Internationale" at the conclusion of one of Leivick's social dramas.

Nevertheless, Schulmeister followed Leivick's career with sympathetic interest. What mattered to him in the end, as he lingered by Leivick's bed at Montefiore, was the memory of that cell in Minsk. And Leivick too, in his paralyzed state, must have thought about those early days, the jail cell, the uproarious Bible play, for something motivated him to wave Schulmeister into the room and gaze into his eyes and squeeze his hand.

Schulmeister had an unhappy end. When he could no longer work, he was obliged to go on welfare, and still later was taken to a home for the aged in the Bronx. He developed cancer; he wanted to kill himself. One of his anarchist comrades came to visit, and he begged her to get a knife and cut the tube that fed his arm. But she wouldn't do it, and he couldn't do it himself. H. Leivick's most fervent reader died at age 89.

Obviously there's a great deal more to be said about Leivick than what I've reported. But not very much has been written about him in English. In asking my friends about him, this is what I've been able to turn up. It is a picture of Leivick as seen by his cellmate Moyshke Schulmeister. Schulmeister told the story to Ahrne Thorne, and Thorne told it to me. Thorne's transcription of Schulmeister's recollections appeared some years ago in an issue of *Freie Arbeiter Stimme*, the now-defunct Yiddish paper of which Thorne was for a while editor. Perhaps some future biographer of Leivick might want to look it up. Thorne tells me that an obituary of Schulmeister appeared some years ago in the rather obscure magazine *Problemen*, which is the last surviving organ of the Yiddish anarchist movement and is published in Tel Aviv.

The Central Park *Golem* seemed to me, by the way, less virtuous than other reviewers were wont to claim. Richard Foreman's Yiddish grasp is slacker than might be. Randy Quaid made a most un-Cabalaesque golem. For a really Jewish play, of the hokey-schmaltzy sort, go see *Kuni Leml* at the Jewish Repertory Theatre. *Kuni Leml*, in English, is a classic 1880 Avrom Goldfadn musical comedy about interchangeable brides and grooms and religion versus enlightenment, rewritten with mediocre operetta music and uneven lyrics. But Ran Avni's direction is superbly farcical, the performers can sing, the Hassidic zeal looks real and the comic lightness is truer than in most—all?—of the musicals on Broadway. □

MUSIC.

DAVID HAMILTON

English National Opera

The English National Opera, which performed this summer in Houston, San Antonio, New Orleans and New York, is the leading vernacular opera company in the English-speaking world. That says something about the American operatic scene, of course; we don't have any equivalent and are arguably the worse off for it. The E.N.O. has a recognizable style, very much a consequence of its linguistic policy; whatever the occasional musical shortcomings, the company presents real performances, not empty grand-opera rituals or perverse parodies.

The New York season opened with *Rigoletto*, in Jonathan Miller's now notorious transplantation to Little Italy—not as troublesome as most such metamorphoses, but not particularly illuminating either. The aspects of the performance that gave pleasure were auditory: the splendidly clear words of the chorus; the aptly lyric weight of the voices; and especially the work of the orchestra, which under the company's music director, Mark Elder, managed to be forceful in rhythm and accent, eloquently colored and inflected, without threatening to overwhelm the singers or their words.

Obvious Lesson Number One: in a performance in the audience's own language, more care is likely to be taken over stage-pit balance than when everyone knows, deep down, that the words will not communicate directly to most of the listeners even if they can be heard. Interestingly, the E.N.O. *Rigoletto* came closer to the kind of sound and balance Verdi had in mind for this opera (albeit in a smaller house) than the more strenuous singing that is usually heard in the Met.

Prokofiev's *War and Peace* is an epic opera—scenes from Tolstoy's novel rather than a wholesale, coherent dramatization. Director Colin Graham's production used back-cloth projections to suggest the action's vast scope and also succeeded in defining personal relationships. Prokofiev's score is inconsistent; political pressure generated a good deal of the sort of thing Virgil Thomson once dubbed "public-square music," and this production allowed more of it than any previous one (including the physically grander but no more convincing Bolshoi version seen at the Met in 1975). Still, the scale of the whole enterprise generated its own impetus, and the musical performance, under James Lockhart, was consistently impressive.

Lesson Number Two: No Western company could have made a comparable effect using the original text. Even though many words failed to come through, the performers shaped their lines with individuality and spontaneity, rather than simply reflecting what they had been taught by a coach (as, for example, do many singers in the Metropolitan Opera's Russian-language performances). Singers singing in their own language have the capacity to vary their delivery, instead of feeling bound by what they have been taught.

In justification of original-language opera, much is made of preserving the sounds the composer "heard in his mind" when he wrote the music (an argument familiar from the original-instruments debate, too). If the quality of the performance was not affected, this might settle the matter, but hardly a composer in history has been willing to sacrifice communication (Handel is only partly an exception); they all expected their operas to be sung in the language of the listeners. In the great opera-producing cultures everything was, until recently, sung in the vernacular, so composers also took for granted that their operas would be sung by people fluent in the language they were singing. That isn't the case anymore. What passes for French in New York opera houses can hardly be defended as the sounds the composers "heard in their minds." (I can imagine a reader oriented to spoken theater rather than opera wondering at the mere fact that this discussion is necessary. Indeed, transposed to the spoken theater, the absurdity of much current operatic practice becomes obvious.)

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A case can be made for original-language opera if the performers are at home in that language; that's why the Bolshoi performances of *War and Peace* were absorbing, even though I couldn't understand the words. Russian recordings of Russian operas and songs, heard with libretto in hand, can be most rewarding; but if the singers aren't Russian (or one of those rare Westerners, such as Elisabeth Söderström or Nicolai Gedda, who seem to be genuinely multilingual), then we're better off with translations, thank you. And that goes in spades for theatrical performances.

One can't leave this subject without touching on the live-performance "surtitles" that are now all the rage. My impression is that, while improving the audience's information, they may actually impede communication. Depending on where you sit, they can be either impossible to avoid, or a neck-craning nuisance to read. (Last season, at the New York City Opera's *Cendrillon*, I discovered that the lines I couldn't grasp in the French text were often simply not translated, so I'd wasted my time looking up there.) Since they aren't synchronized closely with the sung lines, surtitles generate audience reactions at inappropriate times—to the severe discomfiture of singers, I should imagine, especially in comic opera.

"Subtitles work with films, don't they?" Well, they're something of a *pis-aller* even there—but the analogy doesn't hold, anyway. Films aren't live performances, so there's no question of upsetting the performers' timing. Film subtitles help us appreciate foreign performers working in their own languages (although, when translations are dubbed in, we do approach something of the absurdity of the operatic situation). Operatic surtitles strike me as yet another stage in the reduction of the singer to the role of a marionette: now, with the surtitles, he doesn't have to project the words, or even get them right.

The rest of the E.N.O. repertory was in English to begin with. The production of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Patience* was an agreeable compromise between D'Oyly Carte tradition and more modern styles. The most important musical event of the tour was the first American performances of *Gloriana*, the opera Benjamin Britten composed for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953. A post-Strachey view of Elizabeth I and the Essex affair, it was not well received at the time, and pretty well vanished from sight until the E.N.O.'s unobtrusively stylish Colin Graham production of 1966. I heard *Gloriana* twice, and the first time I easily abandoned myself to the richness of Britten's music: its ingeniously creative homage to earlier English styles; its melodic and textural invention (notably the fluent, almost Italianate ensemble of reconciliation in the first scene and the later masque with choral dances); its varied, fresh instrumental writing. But second hearing augmented reservations about the dramaturgy, particularly in the last act. A crucial street scene, in which Essex's followers try to raise rebellion, hinges musically and dramatically on the slender thread of a ballad (unfortunately sung so poorly that neither words nor pitches were clear), and the epilogue, with the Queen and others speaking over orchestral reminiscences, still seems unconvincing. Notwithstanding, this is a major work that undoubtedly adds to Britten's stature.

As throughout the engagement, the E.N.O. singers strongly projected both words and notes; the voices, often serviceable rather than glamorous, were generally used with point and musicianship. I'll single out only Sarah Walker, the Elizabeth; a mezzo taking on a role that really lies a bit high for her, she's a gutsy performer and won a deserved ovation. Mark Elder conducted the score superbly. It was, all in all, the most welcome kind of operatic visit—different from what's available locally, and instructively and pleasurably so. □

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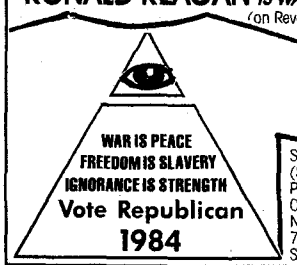

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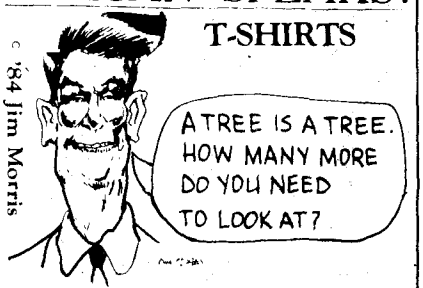

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T	■	U	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	N	■	A
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R	■	■	■	A	■	A	■	A	■	T	■	E	■	M
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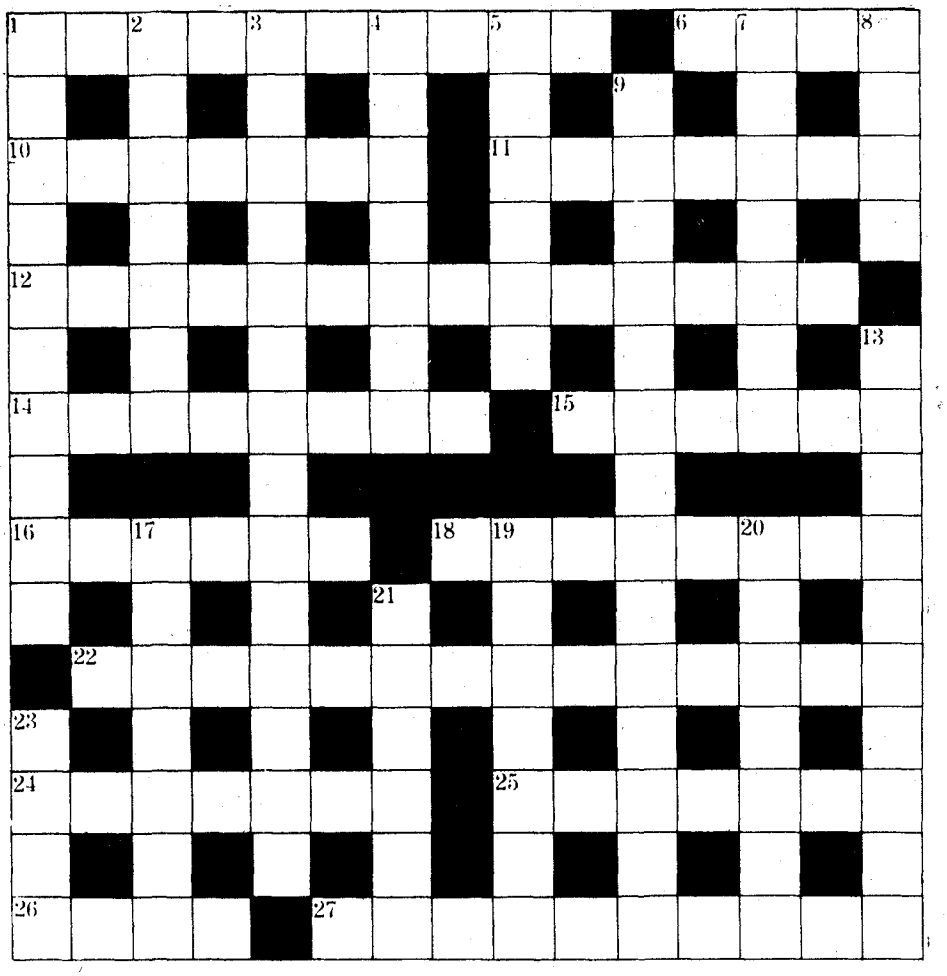
FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 One way your views might be colored suggests a parrot is on your car trim. (10)
6 and 23 down Box holding a ruler—making a flashy display. (8)
10 An oven's possibly something many people devote some time to. (7)
11 Gunga Din's was nothing much before. (7)
12 Figure equal to everything with a sort of eel whistled up. (14)
14 Hint? It's very close, in taking it backward, buddy! (8)
15 See 16
16 and 15 Evidently 11 is firmly established as a place where you might find a nag. (6,6)
18 Obstructs the arrangement of songs, etc. (8)
22 Quite the opposite of 9, as far as control is concerned. (14)
24 Does it find the water hard to sail on? (7)
25 Cause quite a stir with it in stone! (7)
26 A mixture of shag, or rough cut. (4)
27 Mrs. T. Edison could display such artists, perhaps. (10)

DOWN

1 They might be stuck up—perhaps, with reason! (3-2,5)
2 Bunny at first always comes in to allow this. (7)
3 A real mix-up, yet coming to no real arrangement. (14)
4 Perhaps stories of what might be most like an American Beauty. (7)
5 Could a mule with decent beginnings get so beaten? (6)
7 You would have Psalms before more than one such. (7)
8 Anyone might consider this place more unusual. (4)
9 Going all to pieces, and turning its reading into this? (14)
13 They might suggest gophers to some people, although their work is running out. (10)
17 Slide into them at times, though they might only be lookers-on. (7)
19 Nothing with 11 on July 4, for example, but rust! (7)
20 Is it the wind that makes them go up? (7)
21 Such drumming might be on the chest. (6)
23 See 6 across.

SEE LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION AT LEFT

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